LORD FITZHENRY:

A

NOVEL.

BY MISS GUNNING.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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LORD FITZHENRY.

THE firſt queſtion Lord Fitzhenry aſked of himſelf when his thoughts were enough at liberty to be capable of reflection, was this: Shall I have any concealments from my father and mother? The anſwer was a negative: he carried them the letter, examined their countenances as they peruſed the contents, and ſaw with joy more of pleaſure than diſapprobation marked on them.——Fitzhenry, ſaid the Earl, you could not have obliged us more than by repoſing your confidence on our indulgence—aſſure

yourſelf of every thing that is in our power to do, conducive to your happineſs; it is the leaſt return we can make you for the truſt you repoſe in us.—Certainly, cried the Counteſs, for are we not the friends as well as the parents of our children?

Fitzhenry would have ſpoke, to teſtify his gratitude, but his father ſtopped him by taking up the ſubject where Lady Uxington had dropped it.—To have inſpired you, my ſon, merely with the ſentiments of duty and reverence, would not have ſatisfied our demands on your heart; but your conduct agreeably convinces us that we poſſeſs more.—Duty may be irkſome, and reverence cold; it is friendſhip only that can inſpire the one with eaſe, the other with warmth.

How exactly you are deſcribing the picture of my mind by your own! ſaid the

the Counteſs: I have thought of nothing, my dear ſon, but of your Miſs Melmoth ever ſince you firſt deſcribed her to me; may ſhe be yours!—may you be happy!—for you deſerve to be happy. Fitzhenry gracefully, with a bent knee, preſſed to his lips and to his boſom the hands of theſe affectionate parents.—I have the ſame ſort of predilection for Miſs Melmoth, rejoined his father, as he raiſed him up; but from whence it proceeds, I know not, except it be from that ſort of ſympathy which inſtructs us to love thoſe who are dear to thoſe we love.—— Her want of fortune will be no objection; there is but one obſtacle; if that could be removed, I ſhould be ſatisfied: if it cannot, I will be contented.

I have thought it proper to give ſo much of the converſation, as might ſhew the powers veſted by Lord and Lady Uxington in their beloved ſon: more

would be unneceſſary, unleſs it be merely to ſay that he received their ſanction to his making a ſhort viſit to Lord Wardour, prior to commencing his continental expedition; but under the reſtriction of entering into no ſerious engagements till his return from his travels. The ſight of parents is often as keen and always more clear than the ſight of lovers is commonly repreſented; and ſuch hints in the letter, as had been partially ſeen by Fitzhenry thro' the obſcurity of contending emotions, when viewed by the eyes of deliberate reaſon, appeared fully exemplified to the underſtanding of Lord and Lady Uxington: they admired Lord Wardour; they ſaw Lord Wardour loved their daughter: ſuch an eſtabliſhment for Lady Elizabeth was in every point of view deſirable; and theſe words in his letter, which were reconſidered more than once—"truth and conviction who can withſtand?"—gave them room to hope

hope an alliance with him was likely at a diſtant period to take place, as they could not but ſuppoſe, when he made uſe of the ſtrong expreſſion, he adverted to ſome concealed change which had happened in his own religious opinions. To a Catholic, Lord Uxington never would have given her hand; that bar removed, of all mankind Lord Wardour would have been his choice for Lady Elizabeth: the caſe of his ſon was different; huſbands would take care of themſelves, but wives were captive and defenceleſs; it was the miſerable fate of Lady Hillford which had taught him to make the diſtinction. In the mean time, Lady Elizabeth was not to be ſpoken to on the ſubject, as it was poſſible many things might ariſe to make them loſe ſight of ſo diſtant a union; but Fitzhenry, who was certainly indebted for ſuch an act of kindneſs to his friend, exacted a promiſe from his mother, that if

his ſiſter was addreſſed, as might be the caſe, by any other man, before Lord Wardour was at liberty to declare himſelf, ſhe ſhould then be informed of his attachment to her; that if he ſhould be ſo unfortunate as to fail in the purſuit, his infelicity might not be a matter of chance, but the work of judgment. A requeſt ſo reaſonable could not but meet with all the indulgence it merited.

It is impoſſible to give an adequate deſcription of the pleaſure, the joy, and the happineſs that reigned in this houſe of comfort, where all the ſocial virtues had taken up their abode, and where magnificence was conſidered in no other light than a troubleſome gueſt, whom it was proper ſometimes to entertain, tho' ſhe was never welcome. Mr. Courtenay joined them the laſt week in December; and the nineteenth of January was the day fixed upon for a ſeparation that would be

be ſeverely felt by all the parties. Lady Uxington had promiſed her young people a farewel ball, which was fixed for the thirteenth; cards were already ſent out, and the Owens were not omitted.

When Fitzhenry anſwered Lord Wardour, he ſaid all that a man penetrated by love and friendſhip could ſay; but, as he intended to take him by ſurpriſe, was ſilent on the ſubject of his intended excurſion to Wales. He had not received a ſecond letter from his Lordſhip, tho' a month had elapſed, which created him ſome uneaſineſs. In the laſt week he had ſent letter after letter, to aſk what was the matter—but no reply came—his uneaſineſs increaſed—he feared ſomething—he feared every thing—yet without knowing what it was that he did fear. He would go himſelf.—His father, who had already conſented that he ſhould once more ſee Miſs Melmoth before he

quitted England, did not reſtrain him in point of time; he ſet out, leaving Mr. Courtenay ſo happily diſpoſed of in Lord Uxington's family circle, that the apology he thought it proper to make for his ſhort abſence, appeared to be almoſt unneceſſary.

The ideas which he made the companions of his journey, were not of that pleaſant kind one might ſuppoſe a lover to entertain, who at every ſtep was drawing nearer to the preſence of a beloved object, and his perplexities very much increaſed, to perceive, as he came within view of Mrs. Melmoth's houſe, all the windows of it were ſhut; and that North-angle hung out the ſame ſignals of deſolation. His ſervant knocked at the door of the latter; he repeated the ſummons ſeveral times before any body appeared to anſwer it; at length an old Welch woman, opening the door half-way, ſaid ſome-

ſomething which neither the man nor his maſter underſtood, and would have ſhut it again, if Fitzhenry had not diſmounted, caught hold of her gown, and by force detained her:—ſhe ſeemed at firſt to have no ſenſation but what proceeded from terror; when finding they intended to do her no harm, ſhe recovered from her fright enough to make them comprehend by her motions that the families were both gone from thence, and herſelf left to take care of the houſes: ſhe alſo pointed to the ſea, and held up firſt three, then four fingers, which Fitzhenry conſtrued into their being removed ſomewhere on the coaſt, and that they were not expected to return in three or four weeks; he concluded they were trying ſea-air and bathing for the healthful benefit of one or other of them; and trembled leſt it ſhould be Miſs Melmoth.

The

The ſequeſtered ſituation of theſe houſes, which had no neighbourhood but with peaſants, whoſe jargon was to him incomprehenſible, and the very few days to which his leave of abſence was limited, obliged him to rejoin his family wholly uninformed, two-thirds diſcontented, and more than half miſerable. The deranged ſtate of his thoughts he concealed for his own private amuſement, ſlightly ſpoke of the diſappointment he had met with to his parents; and as to his ſiſters, they knew nothing of the occaſion on which he had abſented himſelf.

With all the diſpatch it was in his power to make, he only arrived in town on the twelfth of December, late in the evening. The ball was to be on the day following. He found Lady Elizabeth almoſt as unconcerned about the matter as he was inclined to be; but he alſo

ſaw

ſaw Jemima preparing for the great event, with ſo much vivacity as diſturbed the whole houſe: ſhe was already provided with a partner; Courtenay was to have the honour of dancing with her; and the arrangement of her appearance kept her in perpetual motion; it was the firſt opportunity that had offered of exhibiting her pretty perſon in any thing like a public point of view.——When we ſee young people eagerly purſuing after pleaſure, much is to be ſaid on the ſcore of novelty, but not a ſyllable in favour of habit. The indefatigable Jemima was as buſy in preparing for her ſiſter as for herſelf; every thing was left to her taſte, and ſhe acquitted herſelf of the office with infinite *eclat*.

The Ducheſs of Radſtock ſtill cheriſhed her former opinion reſpecting Fitzhenry's attachment to Miſs Owen, but was forced to relinquiſh her hopes of detaching

taching him from the purſuit, or rather to poſtpone the *finale* of her plans till he ſhould come back from his travels, by which time it was her intention that he ſhould not find Miſs Owen diſengaged; ſhe would do extremely well for her ſecond or third ſon, whoſe fortunes muſt be ſmall. Such an alliance never entered into her head for the eldeſt: beſides, had ſhe thought of it, he was a noble-ſpirited youth, who would not have heſitated to have told her Grace he had a right to pleaſe himſelf as his father had done before him.

At ſome of the ſcore of dinners, which had been expended to ſo little profit on Lord Fitzhenry, Lady Owen had exhibited her vulgarity, and Miſs Owen flouriſhed off her beauty. Her Grace wiſhed to have left the former out of her parties: but that would have been highly impolitic, as ſhe was ſole guardian to the latter,

ter, and ſuppoſed to have greater powers over the diſpoſition of her daughter's perſon and fortune than was really the caſe; ſo that her Grace thought it better to be ridiculed for the choice ſhe made of her company, than run the riſk of loſing ſo rich a prize out of her family. —She had propoſed the heireſs to Lord John—I had rather marry a wax doll, was his reply—neither will do out of a glaſs caſe—one has as much animation as the other—and the want of ſpeech would be a recommendation, as I could not be expoſed by her folly, or bluſh for her affectation.

Lord William had more worldly wiſdom than either of his elder brother; he ſaid he admired Miſs Owen; and it is certain that whenever he looked at or thought of her, he felt the moſt perfect adoration for thoſe attractive charms which lay in the hands of her bankers, and

and of which nobody knew the value better than himſelf. True love, wiſe folks ſay, makes all men diffident: the paſſion of Lord William for two hundred thouſand pounds was ſincere as fervent; no wonder then that this vaſt oppreſſion of ſentiment ſhould produce timidity, and that not being able himſelf to ſolicit the honour of her hand at Lady Uxington's ball, he ſhould requeſt his mother that ſhe would endeavour to obtain for him the ſupreme happineſs for which he languiſhed. Nothing could pleaſe her Grace better than being employed on ſuch an errand; and on the morning of the ball, going out on the ſecret expedition, quite alone, ſhe ordered her carriage to Harley-Street.

Lady Owen, who had now been long enough converſant with this great perſon, and obſervant of the title with which it was common to addreſs people of her rank,

rank, reflected with ſome concern that ſhe muſt have betrayed a certain deficiency in that ſort of knowledge to which ſhe chiefly aſpired, when in her firſt and even ſecond interview ſhe had in common converſation only called her *My Lady;* and to repair this unfortunate miſtake, ſhe reſolved ever after to addreſs her by the full high-ſounding title of my Lady Ducheſs, and to uſe it as often as ever ſhe could, that the world might be convinced ſhe knew the full *etiquette* of polite breeding as well as themſelves.——Her former error had ſo much confuſed her, that, to get out of it as well as ſhe could, ſhe had aſſured my Lady Ducheſs that ſhe did not know ſhe was a Ducheſs when ſhe met her at Lady Uxington's, nor for ſeveral days afterwards, or ſhe ſhould certainly have paid her much more reſpect than it was proper to pay a Counteſs.

When

When her Grace ſtopped at the door to deliver the requeſt from Lord William, ſhe bade her ſervants inquire only for Miſs Owen, becauſe the buſineſs ſhe came upon demanded more immediately the ear of the young lady than her mother; and on the porter's ſaying ſhe was not at home, was going away, but ſtopped on hearing Lady Owen calling from the top of the ſtairs—Lady Owen is at home—tell my Lady Ducheſs that Lady Owen will be mighty happy if my Lady Ducheſs will do her the honour to come up. The Ducheſs, who could not reſiſt the preſſing invitation of my Lady Owen, got out, followed the ſervant up ſtairs, and the greetings on both ſides were truly cordial—my Lady Ducheſs held out her hand, and my Lady Owen ſhook it very heartily, a freedom their great intimacy warranted.——I am quite vexed, ſaid her Grace, not to find Miſs Owen at home,

home, as I am charged with a meſſage to her from one of my ſons.

I wonder now, my Lady Ducheſs, which of the young Lords may it be; for really, my Lady Ducheſs, you have ſo many noblemen belonging to you, that I can't for my life gueſs which of them have ſent a meſſage to Miſs Owen.

It is my ſon William, madam, who, I aſſure you, is a very great admirer of your daughter, and deſires to be her partner at Lady Uxington's ball; will you have the goodneſs to tell her this when ſhe comes back? for I am not able to ſtay two minutes.——Pray tell her Lord William will break his heart if ſhe refuſes him.

That would be quite ſhocking, my Lady Ducheſs, but I hope better things, for no young gentlemen don't now break their hearts for young ladies.

But

But I aſſure you, Lady Owen, my ſon is very ſeriouſly attached to your daughter.

My dear Lady Ducheſs, Miſs Owen is highly obliged to his Lordſhip, and if it was not for Lord Fitzhenry——

Why ſure, Lady Owen, interrupting her, ſhe cannot be engaged to dance with him—he returned to town but laſt night —unleſs indeed he has been to wait on her this morning.

No, no, my Lady Ducheſs, he has not been in Harley-ſtreet, but I know they are always agreed to dance together, meet where they will.

Well, but my ſon may come in for the two ſecond if not for the firſt—It would be rather particular, madam, and give me leave to add, abſurd, for Miſs Owen

Owen to think of dancing more than two dances with the ſame partner.

Yet what can one ſay, my Lady Ducheſs, when young ladies are in love with young gentlemen, and young gentlemen in love with young ladies? what can be ſaid if they will not give up one another as long as they have a ſhoe to their foot?

I ſhould ſay they were a couple of fools, cried her Grace; very much enraged at the ill ſucceſs of her negotiation, rang the bell, called for her carriage, and bidding my Lady Owen a contemptuous farewel, flounced out of the houſe in a pet.——When Miſs Clarinda came home, Lady Owen repreſented to her whatever had paſſed between my Lady Ducheſs and herſelf, and received the feeble-toned applauſes of her exquiſitely refined daughter, who declared ſhe could

could think of no other man but Lord Fitzhenry as a partner at the ball, or a partner for life, and had no reaſon to doubt that he was equally determined to think of no other woman than herſelf.

The Counteſs's doors were to open at nine—ſo the cards of invitation announced: and in five minutes after, Lady Owen's chair, followed by her daughter's, were both ſet down in the hall; they were of courſe the firſt on the liſt of arrivals, and found only the ladies of the family aſſembled—the gentlemen had not yet riſen from table. The dreſs of Clarinda was exceedingly ſplendid and not inelegant, her *tout enſemble* perfectly pretty but perfectly unintereſting. Not ſo my Lady Owen: it was impoſſible to look at her load of ill-choſen finery without being intereſted to know how ſhe would be able to move under it. The dreſs of Lady Uxington and her daughters

ters afforded a contraſt equally ſtriking with what was to be found in their unaffected manners, eaſy movement and unembarraſſed addreſs. My Lady Owen's red and green ſtriped ſatin would provoke one to cry out with Solomon—"and ſtripes for the backs of fools;"—nor would the foil and glitter which covered every particular ſtripe have ſoftened the ſentence, or prevented the application.

Lady Owen firſt looked on her own richneſs, then on the plainneſs of Lady Uxington's apparel, and admired the colour (brown) of the ſatin; but fancied a little pink, or gold, or ſilver, gave a mighty lightſome look to things in dark dull weather, eſpecially when people of condition could afford to wear them: it is not every body, my Lady, ſaid ſhe, that have got your abilities and mine for wearing what is ſuitable to our rank: for inſtance,

inſtance, now there is my Lady Fenton, who, becauſe ſhe is a Lady, might think herſelf like one of us—but I never won't allow that a lady, whoſe lord is up head and ears in debt to other people, ſhould preſume for to wear ſuch things as my Lady Uxington or my Lady Owen.

I beg your Ladyſhip's pardon, replied the Counteſs; I make but one diſtinction on the article of dreſs, which is, that if all mothers who have grown-up daughters would reſign their ornaments to them, and be content with exact neatneſs in their own perſons, we ſhould act much more like rational beings than we do at preſent.

It was a ſenſible obſervation, and almoſt a pity that it ſhould have been thrown away on Lady Owen, who remarked that, if there was money enough for both, ſhe did not ſee no impropriety

why ladies who were not much older than their daughters ſhould not dreſs as well as they did. The arrival of more company put an end to the ſubject. The young people had been engaged a different way—Miſs Owen ſaid ſo much in praiſe of the natural roſes which adorned the fair boſoms of Elizabeth and Jemima, that they had good-naturedly taken her into another apartment, where a profuſion of them were blowing on their native trees, and decorated her with a noſegay, as fine or finer than their own. Now, that is vaſtly clever, cried Lady Owen (who had joined them whilſt the Counteſs was receiving her other friends), you have made Miſs Owen, my Ladies, as fine as a queen; young ladies ſhould ſet off one another, for what do it ſignify to be envious? there are enough young gentlemen for you all, I durſt to ſay; but pray, my Ladies, what is become of my Lord? do you know, Miſs Owen nor I have never ſet our eyes upon him ſince we

came into the houſe? he is a mighty pretty gentleman, indeed, to give himſelf ſo little trouble about the ladies! I wonder if he do expect for us to come a courting to him?—Does your Ladyſhip mean my father, or my brother? aſked Lady Elizabeth.—— Before an anſwer could be returned, Lord Fitzhenry made his appearance with Mr. Courtenay, and a great deal of other company ruſhed in at the ſame moment. My Lady Owen bottled up the reproaches ſhe intended for his Lordſhip, to uſe on a more private occaſion. This procraſtination did not proceed from diffidence, for Lady Owen had always a happy freedom of expreſſion, but never ſhone ſo much in that way as when in full dreſs. The reſtraint rather proceeded from Fitzhenry's diſinclination to give her eloquence an attentive hearing; for having made his bows to her gawdy Ladyſhip, he paſſed on to her daughter, whither ſhe eagerly followed him; her round broad face

ſhining

ſhining with delight, and looking about on thoſe who were not ſo much concerned in the ſcene as herſelf, as much as to ſay—Don't you ſee who will be Lady Fitzhenry?——He had hardly told the languiſhing Clarinda that ſhe looked like a divinity, when the fiddles ſtruck up, and every man began to ſelect his partner. Lady Owen had waited with the greateſt impatience to ſee her daughter led out by Fitzhenry; and, he making nothing like a motion to diſtinguiſh her in the manner ſhe expected, ſhe patted him on his ſhoulder with her fan, and aſked what he was dreaming about, that he let Miſs Owen wait ſo long before he drew on his gloves?—I hope, Madam, ſaid he, Miſs Owen will have a much better partner, but I am engaged to dance with Lady Betty Weſtbrook.——Now, that I know is no ſuch thing, ſhe replied, with a raiſed colour, for my dear Ducheſs of Radſtock called on me this very morning, and my Lady Ducheſs herſelf told

me nothing about your being to dance with Lady Betty——I desire, Madam, cried Miss Owen, you would not mortify me so much as to beg a partner.—— Beg a partner! retorted my Lady Owen, why, who would have thought of that, Miss Owen? I should be very glad for to know:—but you and my Lord are such old friends, that I don't see no need for such ceremony on either side.

Lord Fitzhenry begged to assure both the ladies that they had quite mistaken his meaning—he was not positively engaged to Lady Betty Westbrook; but by the laws of *etiquette*, he should be obliged to solicit the honour of her hand: could he have made the same demand on Miss Owen, it would have been a decided matter of choice.—This civil declaration restored them to good humour, and led them farther than ever into the fools' paradise they had before so blindly entered; but what was the

triumph

triumph of her Grace of Radſtock when ſhe ſaw her ſon and her daughter both provided for ſo perfectly to her wiſhes, and ſo much beyond her expectations! for at the ſame inſtant Lady Betty was led to the top of the ſet by Lord Fitzhenry, Lord William was performing the ſame uſher-like office by the glittering heireſs of Sir Ogle Owen's immenſity of riches. All the ill humour her Grace had brought with her into the aſſembly, evaporated like uncorked ether, and ſhe whiſpered Lady Owen how happy it made her to ſee her Ladyſhip had taken her friendly hint of not permitting them to be ſo ridiculouſly particular as to be always dancing together; this whiſper from my Lady Ducheſs was returned by my Lady Owen with another whiſper as low, in which ſhe communicated the very great difficulty with which ſhe had perſuaded my Lord and Miſs Owen to do as my Lady Ducheſs deſired, or even to ſeparate them for two dances: for her part,

ſhe added, it was no wonder that they were ſo fond; it was juſt the ſame with her and Sir Ogle, when they were paying their addreſſes to one another:—in the mean-time never was lover ſo indefatigable as Lord William, or a partner more abſent than Lord Fitzhenry: his body was dancing with Lady Betty, but his ſoul was wandering in ſearch of Miſs Melmoth; however, on the whole, the evening paſſed off very pleaſantly to the greater part of the company: Lord William did not give up his heireſs: the Ducheſs requeſted the ſame indulgence for her daughter, of Lord Fitzhenry, as Lady Betty, ſhe ſaid, was ſo timid, that to change one partner whom ſhe did know, for another whom ſhe was not perhaps ſo well acquainted with, always ſadly diſtreſſed the ſhy creature ſo, that ſhe generally requeſted the firſt partner who engaged her daughter, not to deſert, and was ſure Lord Fitzhenry would excuſe her, that ſhe uſed the ſame freedom

dom with him.——This was not exactly true, but it perfectly ſatisfied his Lordſhip, who, in the preſent ſituation of his thoughts, and the entanglements of his heart, would as ſoon have danced with Lady Betty as her grandmother, or with the grandmother as with Lady Betty herſelf: theſe two inſeparable arrangements inſpired the Ducheſs of Radſtock with an overflowing of wit and pleaſantry that communicated its vivacity to five other Ducheſſes who ſent it round to ten Counteſſes, who conveyed it to ſixteen Viſcounteſſes, who ſent it into the hearts of twenty-five Baroneſſes, who ſpread it through the whole circle. The young ladies were charming, the young men charmed, and many were the foundations laid at this enchanting ball, on which were afterwards erected many marriages; ſome on rocks that ſtood firm againſt the gales of pleaſure and the ſtorms of faſhion; others on ſand that tottered at the breeze of temptation, and

fell to the ground in the whirlwind of diſſipation.

The ſeparation of Fitzhenry from his family was followed by many tears, which ſilently ſtrayed down the cheeks of Lady Uxington and Elizabeth; but flowed with more abundant velocity from the ſparkling eyes of Jemima:—and as the two friends purſued their way to Dover, it was alſo obſerved by Fitzhenry, that his companion, though always of a ſerious turn, was now more than commonly penſive. On being taxed with a ſadneſs which he did not deny, our little Jemima had the credit of inſpiring it placed to her account by the ingenuous Courtenay, who declared that all his views of future felicity depended on finding her diſengaged on their return from the Continent. So early a proof of confidence did not loſe its effect. Fitzhenry promiſed, if he continued of the ſame opinion

nion till a few more years had paſſed over the head of her little giddy Ladyſhip, he ſhould find in him a ſtaunch advocate; and before they touched the French coaſt, they had not a ſecret thought that was not revealed to each other, by which means Lady Jemima and Miſs Melmoth might be almoſt ſaid to become the companions of their travels; at leaſt the never-ceaſing ſubjects of all their converſations—which was attended with this agreeable conſequence, that the delightful theme made rough roads ſmooth—weak horſes ſtrong—bad accommodations good—and the light of the moon equal to the light of the ſun.

The appointments of both Fitzhenry and of Courtenay were magnificent, and their retinues ſplendid. Paris was not what it is at the preſent day: it then afforded a thouſand inchanting ſpectacles for a young man who had never been

out of his own country, and always preſented ſomething new to ſatisfy the inquiries of thoſe who returned to it again in purſuit of ſomething more than mere amuſement. This was exactly the deſcription of my two travellers; and tho' Mr. Courtenay, for his particular reſearches, infinitely preferred Rome to Paris, he was well enough contented, at the inſtigations of Fitzhenry, to while away there two or three months before they proceeded further—Courtenay, who knew how to ſet about doing every thing in the beſt poſſible way, hired a handſome hotel with all its appendages, and introduced Lord Fitzhenry into the moſt diſtinguiſhed families, where he would not have failed of a gracious reception, if he had poſſeſſed no other recommendations than the ſingle one of being Mr. Courtenay's friend: but that was by no means the caſe; his rank enſured him reſpect, and his merit laid claim to much

more than approbation: all the men vied with each other which of them ſhould give him the higheſt proofs of their friendſhip, and the ladies of their ſenſibility. To the politeneſs of one ſex his heart was open, to the advances of the other it was ſhut; Miſs Melmoth was portreſs, and would let no woman enter there but herſelf.

Fitzhenry had written to Lord Wardour before he left London, and after he got to Paris, but no anſwer came to either of his letters: he grew firſt melancholy, next ſuſpicious, and afterwards outrageous:—he ſwore Lord Wardour muſt have deceived him; he forſwore love, and he forſwore friendſhip; Courtenay tried to reaſon him into a better humour, and at laſt ſucceeded ſo far as to make him wear a maſk of gaiety when his ſoul was writhing under all the torturing agonies of jealous ſuſpenſe: he ſoon grew tired of playing the hypocrite, he

he never had tried it before, and it did not ſuit the features of his impetuous mind. They had only a fortnight longer to remain at Paris, and he heartily wiſhed that fortnight could have been blotted from the calendar of time.

In the midſt of his thouſand perplexities he did not forget to make every poſſible inquiry reſpecting the preſent reſidence of his unfortunate aunt, Lady Hillford. When he left England, his family had received no very late accounts from her. Allowed to write but once in ſix months, half that time was ſtill unexpired; and in her laſt letter, dated from Lauſanne, ſhe had no idea to what part of the Continent or to what country they ſhould next proceed, Lord Hillford being always changing and always undecided in his choice of ſituations till the laſt moment. Lord Fitzhenry was charged with private letters from Lord Uxington, to this fondly beloved, this ever regretted

gretted ſiſter, with others of introduction, to be publicly delivered both to Lord and Lady Hillford. He had reaſon to ſuppoſe the ſight of her accompliſhed nephew would afford her ſome ſatisfaction: to that idea the Earl, who looked upon himſelf as the primary cauſe of all her misfortunes, ſacrificed the rational reſentment with which the very name of her tyrant huſband ever inſpired him.—Fitzhenry could get no other information of them at Paris, only that they had paſſed ſome months there ſeveral years before, and ſince that time it was ſuppoſed reſided chiefly in Italy, which intelligence was obtained from a banker who had formerly done buſineſs for Lord Hillford; but never ſince he withdrew himſelf out of France had heard from his Lordſhip, or any thing certain about him.

It is not my intention to follow our travellers ſtep by ſtep through the foreign track

track they purſued, but, at the end of twelve months from the time they quitted London, to ſet them down in the city of Naples, there to achieve what adventures may happen to fall in their way.—In the mean time, and before I return again to offer my ſervices as their hiſtorian, it ſhall be my buſineſs to account for the otherwiſe unaccountable ſilence of Lord Wardour, which had ſo entirely overturned the philoſophy of poor Fitzhenry, as to make him almoſt incapable of pleaſure or improvement. In the progreſs of their tour, Courtenay left no thing unſaid or undone that might awaken him out of his lethargic indifference, and enliven his ſpirits: ſometimes he ſucceeded, but he had always reaſon to wiſh his efforts had been leſs ſucceſsful. The ſenſibility of Fitzhenry's ſoul was fervent and unmanageable:—that melancholy which ſeemed to be the bane of his enjoyments was the ſafeſt ſituation in which he could be placed; to rouſe him from his

his inactivity could only be done by rouſing his paſſions alſo, and on the ſubject of Wardour they amounted to frenzy —on that of Miſs Melmoth, to deſpair.

At the time Fitzhenry made his firſt unexpected viſit at Northangle, Mrs. Melmoth had reaſons for withdrawing herſelf and niece, which, it may be remembered, ſhe did in great haſte as ſoon as the ſervant who preceded him had announced his Lordſhip's approach, but not with ſo much adroitneſs as to prevent the young people from meeting at the ſide of the carriage: ſhe had afterwards reaſons for not refuſing to meet Fitzhenry as long as he continued in the neighbourhood, and even teſtified no reluctance to receive his viſits at her own houſe. Whatever it was that cauſed this ſudden change in her ſentiments it is not neceſſary to declare: it certainly proceeded from no deſire that her niece ſhould make him her conqueſt: on the contrary,

contrary, when ſhe had cauſe to miſtruſt Miſs Melmoth's heart had received a too favourable impreſſion from this dangerous gueſt of the Wardour family, to deſcribe the internal emotions of her mind would be a hard taſk; and ſo much the more difficult, as ſhe entirely diſguiſed them from the obſervation of Miſs Melmoth herſelf, under an impenetrable maſk of external placidity. With Lord and Lady Wardour ſhe was leſs on the reſerve: they had ſeen nothing of this unfortunate attachment as long as Lord Fitzhenry remained with them, but confeſſed that, ſince his departure, Miſs Melmoth's abſence on many occaſions, the pleaſure with which ſhe ſpoke of him, and the changes in her delicate countenance whenever his name happened to be mentioned by any body but herſelf, had betrayed to them, as well as to Mrs. Melmoth, that ſhe did not think of him with indifference—a diſcovery by no means pleaſing to either of the

the two; yet they conſidered it as a tranſient approbation, which having failed to inſpire ſentiments congenial in the object who called it out, muſt of itſelf die away and be forgotten. Lord Wardour ſaid, he would command his ſon to return immediately and complete his union with Miſs Melmoth, though he had entertained no doubts ſo diſadvantageous to the honour of Lord Fitzhenry, as that he would ever interfere with the views of his family, even if he had regarded Miſs Melmoth with more partiality than he had given them room to ſuppoſe; his attentions to her being merely thoſe of politeneſs, ſuch as ſhe might have demanded from him, and received with dignity to her own fame, had ſhe been already the wife of his ſon. Lady Wardour was of the ſame opinion with her huſband—they both very much approved of Mrs. Melmoth's ſilence to her niece on the ſubject; and before the council broke up they had nearly perſuaded

ſuaded themſelves, that there was as little foundation for their fears on her account, as they were certain there were none that Suſpicion herſelf could harbour on the ſcore of Lord Fitzhenry. But ſtill it was thought neceſſary that the letter of recall ſhould be ſent off to Mr. Wardour; his father retired to get it ready, but in the act of doing ſo was ſeized, before it was half finiſhed, with the diſorder which ſummoned him from all the buſy ſcenes of this life, and in a few hours conducted him (I hope) to a better.

Inſtead of receiving the commands of his father to return home, it was now the fate of Wardour to be informed by Mrs. Melmoth, that his father was no more. She requeſted he would give his mother the conſolation of ſeeing him, and he flew to conſole her—but, for many weeks, ſorrow uſurped the countenances of all who approached the miſer-

able

able chamber of mourning, and no other language but that of ſorrow was ſpoken in the family. The concern of Mrs. Melmoth was very much heightened by the diſtance to which this event muſt infallibly have put back the completion of her niece's eſtabliſhment; and that of Wardour was in no ſmall degree augmented by the conſideration of his having two declarations to make to his mother, when ſhe ſhould be able to bear them, which muſt be told, and which he had too much reaſon to ſuppoſe would be attended with greater miſery to her than the blow ſhe had ſo lately ſuſtained —He would never be the huſband of Miſs Melmoth—he was a Proteſtant—Would not theſe tidings, whenever communicated, be more than ſhe could ſupport?—would ſhe not ſink under them? He adored his mother, and ſhuddered as he aſked theſe queſtions of filial ſenſibility. His recantation of errors was not the work of paſſion, but of judgment—

his

his converſation had taken place before he ever ſaw Lady Elizabeth Fitzhenry—it was her aunt Lady Hillford to whom he was indebted for ſowing the early ſeeds of information in his mind, and his own indefatigable diligence cleared Truth from all the rubbiſh of ſuperſtition through which he had been accuſtomed to ſee her. This labour finiſhed, the ſeeds ſprang, and the fruits of them ripened.—Lady Hillford accompliſhed this great work, not by deſign but accident, and even without ſuſpecting how much her arguments aſſiſted his naturally fine underſtanding. Whilſt he was receiving his education at Nice, he frequently made a part of her family, ſhe being exceedingly attached to him for his mother's ſake. He was often in her apartment when ſhe entered into controverſial ſubjects with the prieſts, to whom ſhe was forced, by the harſh commands of her huſband, to give audience one day in a week, from the idea that

at

at laſt ſhe would ſubmit to theirs her hitherto ſtubborn opinions: but every argument ſhe brought forward to ſupport them was advanced with ſo much modeſt wiſdom and immutable firmneſs, that though Henry Wardour never ſeemed to lend his attention to theſe conferences, but buſied himſelf as if ſtudying his ſchool exerciſe; yet young as he was, he did not loſe a word that fell from the lips of Lady Hillford--her captivating defence of truth ſtole upon his ſenſes, he adopted her ſentiments, they were for ever impreſſed on his memory, flouriſhed with his growth, and ripened with his reaſon. He only waited for the opportunity which now preſented itſelf to declare his new faith, but ſtill protracted the declaration, fearful of its conſequence, till his mother's health and ſpirits ſhould be better eſtabliſhed.

Mrs. Melmoth was exceedingly chagrined on his arrival at Northangle, after

ter the death of his father, not to obſerve in him ſymptoms of paſſion for her niece, ſuch as cannot be concealed by any local ſituation, however ſorrowful:—ſhe was far from placing this apathy to the account of grief; ſhe rather conſidered it as the total overthrow of her deep-rooted expectations, which filled her with ſilent ſpleen, and ſhe pined away with vexation. A few weeks revived, though they did not eſtabliſh her hopes. Lord Wardour apparently ſought for opportunities of being alone and in private with Miſs Melmoth; whilſt the affectionate confidence, though it had no reſemblance to love, which ſeemed to ſubſiſt between them, was a change ſo much for the better, that her fears abated and her good humour returned—ſhe thought it was impoſſible they could be ſo much together without entertaining each other on the tendereſt of all ſubjects. She reſolved to gratify her curioſity; and the day ſhe choſe for her ſecret enquiries happened

pened to be that on which Wardour diſcloſed not his own, but the love of his friend for Miſs Melmoth; beſides which, ſhe had alſo the mortification to hear her niece confeſs a very favourable opinion for Lord Fitzhenry. Lady Wardour was not in a ſituation to be immediately conſulted on the important diſcovery: ſhe therefore acted from the impulſe of the moment, and ſtruck, as ſhe imagined, a final blow to the very root of the evil, by diſpatching the anonymous intelligence to Lord Uxington, in a letter that has already made its appearance, and produced conſequences very different from what were expected.

Mrs. Melmoth did not reſt here—ſhe had ſeveral other reſources by which ſhe meant to ſtrengthen her ſecurity againſt her niece's entering into an alliance, which, however great and flattering it might ſeem to unprejudiced perſons, appeared to her the worſt of all poſſible miſ-

misfortunes, and ſhe would have conſigned Miſs Melmoth to the arms of death, rather than to thoſe of Lord Fitzhenry. Her private reaſons for this preference I am not to develop, but ſhall follow her through the track ſhe took to prevent their union.

Mrs. Melmoth had a friend equally intereſted with herſelf in the diſpoſal of her niece, and who, ſhe had cauſe to know, would be equally averſe to any connection for her with the ſon of Lord Uxington; this friend was at a diſtance —ſhe wrote, and waited impatiently till an anſwer could be received. The day after ſhe had contrived to make herſelf miſtreſs of their ſecret, Miſs Melmoth by chance, ſeeing that Lord Wardour came in later than uſual to dinner, aſked if he had been walking. He ſaid, No—the weather was too cold; he therefore made choice of a ſituation by the fire-ſide, where he had juſt finiſhed and ſent off a long

long letter to his friend, Lord Fitzhenry. This put it into the head of Mrs. Melmoth, that except a method could be found out to ſtop ſo dangerous a correſpondence, every other effort that might be deviſed to ſeparate her niece from the purſuit of his Lordſhip would be utterly ineffectual: ſhe immediately thought of an expedient, but durſt not carry it into execution without conſulting Lady Wardour, or indeed without her approbation and aſſiſtance.——She deferred making the communication to her Ladyſhip no longer than till the perſon, to whom ſhe had applied for directions, forwarded them to her; ſhe then made her information, which very much afflicted the diſconſolate widow—that the will of her huſband, which her ſon had never in his father's life-time preſumed to diſpute, ſhould, when he no longer lived to enforce it, be ſet at defiance. She regarded herſelf as the guardian of that will; and though moderate and rational on all

other occaſions, in this one act, which ſhe conſidered as a ſacred duty ſhe owed to the memory of her deceaſed Lord, neither moderation nor reaſon was conſulted, and ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be conducted by the counſel of Mrs. Melmoth into ſcenes of ſtratagem with which her upright mind had been hitherto unacquainted.

Lady Wardour had placed near the perſon of her ſon, from the time he was ſix years old, a young man whoſe mother had been her nurſe: he was ever after the truſty, well-beloved ſervant of his maſter; and the many kindneſſes beſtowed by her on this man and his family, left her no room to doubt his gratitude in punctually obeying her commands, though they ſhould not correſpond with thoſe of his Lord.—— The trial was made, and ſucceeded: he was not ordered to with-hold any letters that came to his Lord; he was only reſtricted never to forward ſuch as were

were written by him, and addreſſed to Lord Fitzhenry, but to deſtroy them as ſoon as they came into his hands; and always to be on the watch, that her ſon did not conſign them to the care of any other perſon. All this he faithfully promiſed, and as faithfully executed; which will ſufficiently account for Fitzhenry's ſeries of diſappointments, that at laſt wore out his patience, and forced him to renounce both the friendſhip and correſpondence of Lord Wardour, who, by a further contrivance of the ladies, never receiving but one letter from the offended lover of Miſs Melmoth, and finding all that he ſaid to bring forward an explanation of this unaccountable ſilence remained unanſwered, his ſituation was at leaſt not more enviable than that of Fitzhenry himſelf.

Immediately on receipt of the expected letter from the confidential friend of Mrs. Melmoth, after a long conſultation between her and Lady Wardour, the

latter ſignified to her ſon, that by the advice of her phyſician, ſhe propoſed ſpending a few months in the ſouth of France, for the re-eſtabliſhment of her health; he moſt readily offered to attend her wherever ſhe went; and Mrs. Melmoth ſaid, jeſtingly, Suppoſe we all go together? I think it would be mighty comfortable: how ſhould you like it, my dear? (turning to her niece)—Exceedingly, replied Miſs Melmoth—Well, then, we will actually go, added her aunt; and whilſt her Ladyſhip is ſipping at the fountains of health, perhaps I ſhall give you a peep into the garden of the world, dear Italy, which it is a long time ſince I viſited:—I ſuppoſe it will be the laſt of my excurſions, for at ſixty-five I muſt not expect any more ſuch rambles.—Thus did ſhe make a deep concerted ſcheme appear to be nothing more than the effect of chance; decorating grave deſign in the gay garb of frolic. Fitzhenry was immediately informed of the newly adopted plan; but, alas! this

letter,

letter, which, had it been permitted to have reached his hand, would have made him the happieſt of mankind, was the very firſt on which the ſervant of his friend, the creature of Lady Wardour, practiſed infidelity to his Lord, in being too faithful to the commands of her Ladyſhip!

Courtenay, on their arrival at Naples, adviſed Fitzhenry to beſtow one letter more on Lord Wardour: but his counſel was rejected; and the once agreeable, lively companion of his travels, by the ſuppoſed perfidy of his treacherous friend, and the ceſſation of hope that he ſhould ever again behold the fair face of Miſs Melmoth, was converted into an unſocial being, wrapt in the gloom of melancholy; turbulent, refractory, unmanageable, diſappointed, diſſatisfied and diſtreſſed. They took poſſeſſion of a handſome houſe, which one of Mr. Courtenay's friends had previouſly provided

and prepared for their reception. The Count de Ferranda, to whom the application had been made, was a man of ſenſe, faſhion, and information:——he waited to ſalute them on their arrival, and was afterwards prevailed on to paſs the evening in their ſociety. This reinforcement to their party was a real acquiſition to Courtenay; his ſtrongeſt efforts could not draw Fitzhenry from the abyſs of deſpondence: where he plunged, there he ſtuck—till, by the united endeavours of this well-bred Italian, his diſconſolate Lordſhip was brought a little nearer towards the ſurface of rationality: what ſerved to accelerate this mighty taſk, was the intelligence the Count gave him, that Lord and Lady Hillford were both at that time reſident in Naples.

To be ſo near Lady Hillford, whoſe character he revered, though her perſon was unknown to him, communicated the firſt ray of pleaſure which had viſited his benighted

benighted imagination for many months. He was impatient to throw himſelf at the feet of his reſpectable aunt; but did not wiſh their firſt interview ſhould take place in the preſence of her leſs reſpectable Lord. He ſignified to the Count his deſire of being admitted to the preſence of his aunt before he was preſented to Lord Hillford, and was adviſed by him to make his viſit late in the morning, when it was moſt probable his Lordſhip would be from home. He ſaid he was no ſtranger in the family, and offered to conduct him to Lady Hillford—a civility declined by Fitzhenry, who had many things to ſay to his aunt from his father, which were not calculated for any ear but her own.

The converſation of the evening turned a great deal on the moſt intereſting of women; for no ſooner had Fitzhenry been informed the Count was numbered amongſt the friends of Lady Hillford,

than he aſked ſo many queſtion concerning her health, her looks, her ſpirits, and her amuſements, as drew on a long chain of anſwers, to the laſt link of which they were hardly arrived, when ſupper was ſet upon the table; and the ſervants being ſoon diſmiſſed, Count Ferranda contrived to renew the ſubject, which ſeemed of all others to engage the attention of Lord Fitzhenry.

I have had the honour of telling you, my Lord, ſaid the communicative Count, all that I know of the moſt charming wife our country has to boaſt;—pardon me that I call Lady Hillford my countrywoman! ſhe has ſo long been the ornament of our Italy, that we have the addreſs to forget your England has claims to her birth, and the vanity to conſider her our own by adoption. I offered to conduct you to her preſence; it was a ſelfiſh propoſal.

Ah!

Ah! cried Fitzhenry, interrupting him, with a gay air, you almoſt make me jealous for the honour of my family:—if my aunt were not paſt the meridian of her youth, the warmth of your praiſes, and your hint of ſelfiſh motives, might have raiſed my ſuſpicions.

Then you would have injured the Count, ſaid Courtenay: had your aunt been as young and beautiful as Lady Jemima, and the wife of another, he would have held her ſacred. I will bring you a proof in how much—He would have proceeded, but the Count prevented him: We muſt have no pretended proof, ſaid he, of a fact you may not find it quite ſo eaſy to eſtabliſh; but it will be leſs difficult to convince my Lord that I entertain no ſentiment for Lady Hillford, except of the moſt reſpectful homage.—Lady Hillford has a friend—ah, that friend!—Since you will not permit me the honour to be your eſcort when you

viſit Lady Hillford, I ſhall certainly importune all the ſaints in my calendar, not to throw that angel friend in the way of your Lordſhip; but if they ſhould be deaf to my petition, behold her if you can with indifference—When you ſee her, pity me—and when you know her, plead for me.

The Count's carriage was announced; Fitzhenry aſſured him all his injunctions ſhould be obeyed, and he took his leave, leaving our travellers to ſeek that repoſe, for which forty hours on the road without reſt had ſufficiently prepared them.

The next morning Mr. Courtenay went out to pay his compliments to a number of his former acquaintance, whilſt Fitzhenry proceeded to the houſe of Lord Hillford. He firſt enquired for his Lordſhip—He was gone out—Lady Hillford was at home. He deſired to be ſhewn

to

to her apartment, and followed the ſervant; who having aſked by what name he would chooſe to be announced, before he made his reply, the door opened on the inſide, and Count Ferranda's Divinity (for it could be no other) would have paſſed by him, if he had not ſeized her hands, and with gentle violence reconducted her to the room ſhe had quitted, where, falling at her feet, and unable to diſguiſe the diſtracted ſtate of his heart, he cried out: Tell me, in mercy tell me! are you the wife of Lord Wardour?—The door opened a ſecond time —I beg your pardon, ſaid a gentleman, who entered precipitately, I came hither to ſeek my wife. I beg your pardon, Miſs Melmoth; I did not expect to have found you ſo particularly engaged.—— Fitzhenry ſuſpected this intruder might be Lord Hillford, as in fact it was, and haſtily roſe from his ſupplicating poſture. —Miſs Melmoth bluſhed ſcarlet deep, and heſitatingly pronounced the name of

Lord

Lord Fitzhenry.—He ſaw the diſturbance of her mind, and gracefully advancing: Lord Hillford, I preſume, ſaid he, and the huſband of my father's ſiſter?—The ſame, and perfectly at your Lordſhip's ſervice, replied this obliging uncle, whoſe ſudden change of countenance from auſterity to complacency might have appeared wonderful to obſervers leſs immerged in their own affairs than the lovers who ſtood before him.—I am indeed moſt heartily at your ſervice, continued he, embracing his nephew according to the cuſtom of the country, and ſaluting him on both ſides of his face: he then added, Will you be ſo good, Miſs Melmoth, as to announce our gueſt to Lady Hillford?—Such ſurpriſes as theſe are very often leſs pleaſant in their conſequence than delightful in their approaches.—Why do you tremble, Madam? It gives me infinite pleaſure to diſcover, in the firſt moment of our acquaintance, that my nephew is a man of

of taſte: what ſtronger proof could he have given me of it than to find him at your feet?—Whilſt ſpeaking he detained her hand in his, ſo that ſhe could not eſcape from his raillery: but the moment ſhe could withdraw it from his graſp, away ſhe hurried, covered with the deepeſt confuſion: whilſt Fitzhenry, very little more at eaſe than herſelf, preſented to the cruel tormentor Lord Uxington's letter, which the perſon to whom it was addreſſed put into his pocket with its ſeal unbroken; politely ſaying, he would examine the contents at a leſs valuable moment: For who, added he with the moſt gracious air in the world, and tones fully as inſinuating, who would be gratified with profeſſions of friendſhip, after ſuch a teſtimony of its reality as my good brother has conferred in ſending you to me?

Fitzhenry, at any leſs intereſting period of his life, would have been puzzled

to

to find the leaſt analogy between the Lord Hillford who had made his father and his aunt miſerable, and the Lord Hillford who loaded him with ſo many tokens of kindneſs; but now it paſſed almoſt without a comment: his thoughts were wandering in quite another direction, and he was now only puzzled with ſurmiſes of how long it would be before he might expect the return of Miſs Melmoth; what was become of Wardour; and how ſhe happened to be eſtabliſhed in the family of Lord Hillford, where from many circumſtances ſhe appeared ro be quite at home.—So much were his ideas entangle in the intricate mazes of uncertainty, that tho' the queſtions propoſed by his courteous relation, ſuch as, When he left England —had he a good journey—did he like Paris—when did he get to Naples—with others of the ſame eaſy nature, it muſt be allowed, required no extraordinary talents of recollection to anſwer, at leaſt with as much wiſdom as they were aſked,

yet

yet he never found himſelf at a greater loſs for the powers of expreſſion, till Lord Hillford awakened his attention, by obſerving the happy acquiſition his wife had the good fortune to make within her family circle by the addition of Miſs Melmoth's ſociety, adding: Our acquaintance with the charming girl was merely accidental; but your claims on her friendſhip, I preſume, my Lord, have been long eſtabliſhed?

Fitzhenry replied, firſt a little confuſed, and afterwards a great deal more agitated, that he had once the happineſs of ſeeing Miſs Melmoth before he quitted his country; but as to his claims on her friendſhip, he feared there was another by whom they were ſuperſeded.

Lord Hillford ſmiled; his ſmile was gracious and encouraging: Pardon me, ſaid he, if, after witneſſing the reception ſhe has given you, I declare myſelf incredulous on the ſubject of your having a favoured

a favoured rival, though I know there is another fervent adorer in the caſe.—— Wardour muſt be unſucceſsful, when a Fitzhenry is his competitor. But enough! I hear my wife coming out of her room, we will talk of this matter ſome other time.

Lady Hillford entered, her Lord preſented Fitzhenry to her. My deareſt Iſabella, ſaid he, receive your accompliſhed nephew.—He was already on his knees before her: ſhe examined him with a look—Oh, that look was not to be deſcribed!——Unable to utter, ſhe knelt down, threw her arms around him, and fainted.——It is impoſſible to ſay what were the emotions of Fitzhenry: even Miſs Melmoth, by whoſe arm on her entrance ſhe was ſupported, had no part in them; both ſhe and Lord Hillford tenderly aſſiſted him in lifting her to a ſofa. The beautiful eyes of the former were ſuffuſed in the tears of ſympathy;

pathy; whilſt thoſe of the latter expreſſed much more than I have time to decipher.—Every means was adminiſtered to Lady Hillford's recovery, and of courſe ſucceeded; one of her hands was retainedby her nephew, the other by Miſs Melmoth, a mechanical motion in uniting her own brought theirs together. Fitzhenry's ſoul thrilled with tranſport, and the face of Miſs Melmoth was illuminated with bluſhes. The action was ſudden as involuntary. Fitzhenry did not augment her confuſion by looking towards her; but, fixing his eyes with tender devotion on his aunt, made ſuch fervent enquiries concerning her health, as if his thoughts had been occupied on no other ſubject: indeed they were much divided between the meridian and the ſetting ſun; both, in all their ſplendour, affecting his ſenſes at the ſame moment. He had never, but in the two Ladies before him, ſeen beauty

beauty in its noon ſo lovely, or in its decline ſo faſcinating.

The powers of obſervation preceded thoſe of articulation—Lady Hillford gazed on her nephew as I have ſeen mothers look on the infant offspring to whom they have juſt given life, when they are firſt preſented to their arms. There was an awfulneſs in her ſilence, which to have interrupted by ſound, would have been to ſin againſt ſenſibility; even by Lord Hillford it was held ſacred till ſhe broke it herſelf, and exclaimed—Gracious God! how like Fitzhenry when I laſt ſaw him—how very like my dear brother!

I am not going to repreſent a full-length portrait of this interview—I have rather choſen to delineate a feature of it here and there—juſt as they happened to ſtrike my own fancy, ſo I ſcatter them on my canvaſs.—Miſs Melmoth had vaniſhed

niſhed out of the room as ſoon as ſhe ſaw Lady Hillford no longer ſtood in need of her aſſiſtance; and my Lord himſelf did not ſtay many minutes behind her, having firſt apologiſed to Fitzhenry for a ſhort abſence, and politely inſiſting on his being their gueſt at dinner—He had buſineſs, he ſaid, to tranſact of a particular nature, which called him out at an early hour: ſome neceſſary papers being forgot, he returned home to fetch them, and pronounced the neglect to be fortunate which had procured him the honour of embracing his Lordſhip much before the time he ſhould otherwiſe have done. Fitzhenry, in making proper returns for all this inundation of civility, did not forget to plead, in defence of waving the dinner invitation (which he fervently wiſhed to accept), that Mr. Courtenay would expect him; by which means he got his friend included, to whom he diſpatched a ſhort

a ſhort billet, in which the name of Miſs Melmoth was not once mentioned.

Lady Hillford, on finding herſelf alone with Fitzhenry, took no advantage of her Lord's abſence, to tincture the mind of her nephew with unfavourable impreſſions of his ſincerity; on the contrary, ſhe ſpoke of her huſband as if ſhe wiſhed to inſpire him with reſpect for his character. The meſſages and letters which in this moment of privacy he delivered from his father, convinced her that he was well acquainted with her unfortunate fate—ſhe was ſorry he knew ſo much againſt the enemy of his houſe: —Truths which ſhe could not deny ſhe ſtrove to ſoften, and what ſhe could not herſelf but recollect with anguiſh of heart, by the cheerfulneſs and vigour of her exertions ſhe endeavoured to make him forget. Perhaps, ſaid ſhe, I have not always thought my ſituation ſo enviably happy as I think it at preſent—

No,

No, deareſt Fitzhenry—ſince my Lord's inclinations and the duty of a wife tore me from the arms of my beloved brother, of my other affectionate friends I have deſerved a great deal of cenſure, for not ſupporting my lot with more contentment than the weakneſs of my erring nature would permit.

Oh—do not—do not accuſe yourſelf, he cried, affectionately kiſſing her hands—for if it is in human nature to be perfect, you are all—all perfect.

Ah, replied ſhe, ſmiling, there is in you, I already perceive, that lively ardency which I uſed to be ſo much afraid to encounter with in your father; I ſhall have no more courage to combat with you than with him—So let it paſs that I am—a perfect old woman; ſtill I will not be vain of the diſtinction, as I every day ſee myſelf infinitely ſurpaſſed by a young one.—Fitzhenry coloured—

Think

Think on Lord Hillford's goodneſs to me for having given me ſuch a companion as Miſs Melmoth—You muſt love him for this indulgence to my wiſhes, you muſt help me to acquit the obligation I owe him on this particular ſcore, and you will do it with pleaſure when you are better acquainted with my young favourite.—Fitzhenry ſmiled —Neither his change of colour, nor his ſmile, was obſerved by her who had excited them, her looks were rather averted from than fixed on him; ſhe feared his penetrating glances might ſearch deeper than ſhe would have directed them, and at laſt find out the ſecret corner of her heart, in which ſhe had depoſited all the hidden treaſures of her grief. She ſpoke, as Fitzhenry choſe to conſtrue it, in the language of Hope; ſhe appeared, through the optics of his viſion, the very ſeraph of conſolation; he aſſured himſelf at leaſt of her compaſſion, and poured out the whole contents

tents of his enamoured ſoul into her affectionate boſom.

Lady Hillford liſtened with attention, and heard him to an end without interruption, except by ſuch ſhort ſentences as theſe, which ſhe could not always reſtrain—Grant it, good God!—can it be?—what happineſs!—will my brother conſent?—dear generous brother!—But no ſooner had he finiſhed his little narrative, than ſhe cried out in the ſanguine expreſſion of a flattering imagination—Yes, Fitzhenry, ſhe will be yours!—Miſs Melmoth will be yours!—Wardour is a good young man, but he muſt not contend with Fitzhenry.

Tell me, for God's ſake, my dear, my kind aunt, what do you know of Wardour's preſent pretenſions to Miſs Melmoth?—He once reſigned them to me—unſolicited reſigned them—courted me to engage her heart—told me I had

had ſucceeded.—By Heaven, if he has deceived me——

Moderate your reſentment, ſaid ſhe, interrupting him. I have a better opinion of Lord Wardour, I knew and loved him when a boy: he is certainly poſſeſſed of principle; he would not intentionally deviate from the laws of honour: if he has deceived you, he muſt firſt have deceived himſelf; liſten to me with patience, and I will tell you what I have heard on the ſubject from my Lord, as well as from Lord Wardour's mother, who is one of the beſt of women. Fitzhenry ſignified his grateful acquieſcence, after which Lady Hillford gave him the following information:

About eight months ago, ſhe ſaid, Lord Hillford had taken her on an excurſion of pleaſure to ———, the waters of which were held in ſo great eſteem, that

that the multitude of drinkers, who had got there before them from every quarter of Europe, had made it extremely difficult for them to procure any ſort of accommodation. Lady Wardour, who had tried their efficacy without finding the benefit ſhe expected to receive, was on the eve of quitting it, when ſhe heard by accident that they were arrived, and in diſtreſs for either houſe or lodgings to repoſe in until Lady Hillford ſhould have recovered the fatigues of her journey, which had been a long one, upwards of two hundred miles Lord Wardour immediately waited on them to offer the houſe his mother occupied, who meant to leave it on the following day, accompanied by an affectionate requeſt from her Ladyſhip, that ſhe might ſee them before her departure, to renew that acquaintance which in the former part of their lives had a too ſudden termination.—The offer was thankfully accepted, the requeſt

joyfully complied with, and the whole of that day was paſſed in the ſociety of Lady Wardour and Miſs Melmoth. Lord Wardour ſpent part of it with them; but the greater part he was abſent, tranſacting ſome affairs for his mother and Mrs. Melmoth before their departure, who were both unable to aſſiſt themſelves, the former being reduced both in mind and body, the latter ſo ill in a fit of the ague that ſhe did not once make her appearance. Both Lord and Lady Hillford were enchanted with the beautiful niece of the invalid lady, whom they had not ſeen; and when Lady Wardour teſtified her regret that Miſs Melmoth ſhould ſacrifice ſo much of her time in warm chambers, ſhut up with the ſick and the melancholy, which might at laſt prove prejudicial to her own health—when ſhe lamented that the place they were ordered to was much leſs agreeable than the ſituation they were about to leave—Lord Hill-

ford, having whiſpered his wife, and read in her enlightened features how much the propoſition would delight her, immediately propoſed to take the lovely girl under their protection, as long as Lady Wardour and Mrs. Melmoth found it for the advantage of their healths to remain on the Continent. Lady Hillford declared to Fitzhenry, that, whilſt this arrangement ſtood ſuſpended, ſhe felt as if the ſentence of her own life or death was in agitation;—ſuch a *penchant* had ſhe taken for the engaging charmer, and ſo anxiouſly did ſhe wiſh for ſo ſweet a companion. It was a favour, ſhe ſaid, that endeared Lord Hillford to her heart more than all the other acts of kindneſs he had ever ſhewn her. Lady Wardour conſented to crown their wiſhes, if they were not oppoſed by Mrs. Melmoth, to whoſe apartment ſhe withdrew, and in a very ſhort time returned, not only with her approbation, but a thouſand grateful acknowledgments to the noble

pair who had condeſcended to grant their protection to her niece. Miſs Melmoth herſelf appeared divided between the joy of following Lady Hillford, for whom ſhe felt a predilection ſtrong as her own, and grief at leaving behind her the only relation ſhe had ever known, together with Lady Wardour, whom ſhe conſidered equally her parent.—The latter had a long conference with Lord Hillford; and when they rejoined his wife, ſhe ſaid with a ſigh: My dear friend, you will forgive my abſence—would to God there was no difference in our moſt material opinions! then could I indeed ſpeak without fear of offending you on the ſubjects which for want of that analogy I can now only preſume to confide with his Lordſhip: he will tell you, madam, the views we have for our amiable ward; and my ſon will hereafter unite his thanks with ours, for the goodneſs you are inclined to ſhew her. Whiſt this

converſation paſſed in the drawing-room, Miſs Melmoth was in her aunt's apartment, and ſoon after they were joined by Lord Wardour, who teſtified both ſurpriſe and concern that they were ſo ſuddenly to loſe the charming companion of their further excurſions. That evening Miſs Melmoth returned with her new friend, Lord Hillford obſerving there would be more cruelty than kindneſs, in permitting her to paſs an anxious night of tears and regret with the party from whom the next day ſhe was to be ſeparated.

Fitzhenry interrupted his aunt at this part of her narrative, by aſking what ſymptoms of paſſion ſhe perceived in Lord Wardour on his taking final leave of Miſs Melmoth.—They ſeemed to part, replied ſhe, as tender affectionate friends generally do, who ſuppoſe it may be a long time before they are to meet again.—I thought ſo, cried Fitz-

henry, riſing from his chair, and walking two or three turns haſtily acroſs the room—I thought ſo—like tender and affectionate friends! Proceed, my dear aunt, you have ſaid nothing yet to exculpate Wardour—Wardour is a villain!

Say that again, dear as you are to me, replied Lady Hillford with a firm tone, and I am ſilenced on the ſubject of your ſuppoſed wrongs, not only now —but for ever. He had long known that ſteadineſs was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of her exalted mind; he knew that her word was ſacred; he therefore threw a veil over his reſentment; and panting with impatience for a nearer view of his misfortune, he repreſſed the agony of his tortured ſoul, making every poſſible conceſſion for the warmth into which he had been betrayed; and ſo effectually calmed the apprehenſions of Lady Hillford, that ſhe no more heſitated

ed to ſatisfy his eager demands, to the utmoſt extent of her knowledge; which ſhe confeſſed was chiefly derived from the communications of her Lord, by whom ſhe had been informed, that Miſs Melmoth's union with Lord Wardour was a decided point between the two families, from an early period of their infancy; that unhappily the affection which ſhould have been mutual, ſubſiſted but on one ſide—Lord Wardour adored her—ſhe could not endure him. When he diſcovered her averſion to be ſo ſtrongly rooted as to afford no probability that it could ever be eradicated, the generoſity of his ſentiments prompted him to the enthuſiaſtic ſacrifice of his deareſt hopes; on the ruins of which he meant to eſtabliſh her ſatisfaction. In purſuance of this plan, he made no complaints to his family of that freezing coldneſs by which his faireſt expectations were blaſted; he rather ſtrove to convince them that the delays, which

for her ſake alone he ſtudied to throw in the way of their wiſhes, originated in his own prejudices againſt entering into thoſe early engagements, which he pretended to ſay were a reſtraint on the pleaſures of youth.—He did more—he endeavoured to like another as well, if poſſible, as he had liked Miſs Melmoth; and fancied nothing was wanting to complete the conqueſt a young Engliſh lady of rank had begun to make upon his heart, but to ſee Miſs Melmoth removed from the poſſibility of being his, by becoming the wife of a more favoured lover.—Remember your promiſe, continued Lady Hillford, ſeeing Fitzhenry's blood mounting with velocity into his face, and his eyes flaſhing with more than the fire of expectation. If I fail to be the ſucceſsful advocate of Lord Wardour, blame my want of powers; but glance not a ſuſpicion injurious to his honour. I promiſe you, he replied with vivacity, that I ſhall form

form no new opinions prejudicial to his Lordſhip's character, though I have ſome reaſon to believe the lady of rank to whom he tried to attach his wavering affections was my ſiſter, and your Ladyſhip's niece; and that I was the friend he intended to honour with the hand of Miſs Melmoth. Oh, madam! had he been ſincere! had he not made me the dupe only of his unſtable purpoſes, then, indeed, would he have been the friend of Fitzhenry!

And why will you not ſtill believe him your friend, my dear nephew? I muſt haſten to convince you that in truth he deſerves the appellation, or I ſhall keep you in no ſort of order—he ſtill neglects his own intereſt, to plead your cauſe with Miſs Melmoth!

Ah, madam! who ſhall aſſure me of that circumſtance?

Miſs Melmoth's own confeſſion ſhall ſome day or other convince you of the truth I have uttered.

A thouſand bleſſings on the lips that pronounce my fate of ſo different a complexion from what my imagination had figured it! If Miſs Melmoth has told you this, ſhe cannot hate me.

She does not hate you: I am the confidante of her moſt ſecret thoughts: ſhe loves Wardour as her brother—ſhe does not ſtop exactly at the ſame bounds in her favour for Fitzhenry. Fitzhenry was now at her feet, ſilent through exceſs of joy.—She held out her hand; he carried it to his lips.—Your paſſions, ſaid ſhe raiſing him, are, I find, alike unbounded, whether in the extreme of love, hatred, or jealouſy, and will make you their eternal ſport, unleſs you learn to keep them under ſome ſort of ſubjection: —theſe ardours, added ſhe with a ſigh that

that found a covered way to paſs by without being noticed, under the umbrage of a ſmile, which ſmile would have miſled attention much more diſengaged than Fitzhenry's—theſe ardours—theſe flights from reaſon, ſaid ſhe, I have ſome cauſe to ſuppoſe are hereditary, and that not one of my family is ever fated to eſcape them.

But how, my deareſt aunt, exclaimed Fitzhenry, can you tell me that I am not hated by your divine friend, yet expect that I ſhall keep my ſenſes?

Keep them together a few moments longer, ſaid ſhe, that you may be able to collect and arrange what I have yet remaining to tell you.—Pardon me, he cried, if I interrupt you to aſk, before I can liſten to any thing elſe, why if Miſs Melmoth condeſcends to beſtow a thought on me, why did ſhe ſhew marks of tender affection when ſhe parted with Wardour?—

dour?—and why, if Wardour neglects his own intereſt to plead my cauſe, why did he appear to be concerned at the ſeparation? Why did they bid each other adieu, ſo much like tender, affectionate friends who ſuppoſe it may be a long time before they are to meet again?—You find I have treaſured every word of yours in my memory—you ſee alſo that I have improved by your ſtricture on violence—Can man be more calm, more compoſed than I am? And yet I ſhould be very glad to have theſe queſtions anſwered; there is a nicety in ſplitting the delicate fibres by which love and friendſhip are to be diſunited, of which, without your aſſiſtance, I hold myſelf utterly incapable.

Ah, my poor Fitzhenry! replied Lady Hillford, I do not love you leſs, but pity you more than I can expreſs, for this warmth, this unmanageable warmth, which is much too ſtrong to admit of the

diſguiſe

diſguiſe you are trying to throw over it. However, your doubts ſhall be ſatisfied—I repeat to you, that there is no tie that binds Miſs Melmoth to Lord Wardour, but eſteem and gratitude; would you deſire that the woman you wiſh to make the companion of your life ſhould be blind to merit, inſenſible to kindneſs, a prude, and an ingrate?—What a monſter, cried Fitzhenry, do you hold up to my view?—God forbid Miſs Melmoth's mind ſhould be deformed by a ſingle feature in this deſcription!—And yet, replied his ſenſible monitreſs, ſhe would have reſembled the whole, if ſhe could have refuſed her friendſhip, nay more, her ſiſterly affection, to the rival of whom you entertain unfounded apprehenſions. Judge yourſelf whether he is entitled to her confidence, when I tell you that, by her own confeſſion, I have diſcovered her perfect ignorance of his paſſion for her, which Lord Hillford aſſures me has been nearly fatal to himſelf: he talks to her,

her, not of his own love, but of yours, dear Fitzhenry, with a conſtancy that does honour to his ſincerity as a friend, and credit to his fortitude as a man. Here the *téte-à-tête* was interrupted by the arrival of the Princeſs Maritinda, Count de Ferranda, Mr. Courtenay, two other Engliſh gentlemen, and ſeveral nobleſſe of both ſexes; all dinner gueſts, expected by Lady Hillford, but for whoſe reception ſhe was not ſufficiently prepared; hours having appeared but as moments in the ſociety of a nephew ſo infinitely endeared to her by a thouſand heart-rending conſiderations. Having preſented him to the company, and permitted his preſentation of Mr. Courtenay, who, as the nephew of Dr. Burnet, was received with maternal marks of affection, ſhe retired to get rid of her *papillots*, well knowing what to expect, had Lord Hillford returned before ſhe had made her toilet.

Fitzhenry,

Fitzhenry, whoſe burden of cares was conſiderably lightened, though not entirely removed, did the honours of the houſe in the abſence of his aunt, with ſo much eaſe, grace, and vivacity, that all the men were his admirers, and all the women his captives. Courtenay was aſtoniſhed to ſee him more lively than he had ever ſeen him, even before his laſt long ſeries of diſappointments; and the Count, who had the laſt evening declared himſelf the adorer of Lady Hillford's friend, could conceive this change in the gloomy Engliſhman to proceed only from the bright eyes which had doneſomuch execution on himſelf.—Haveyouſeen her? whiſpered he.—Yes, re-whiſpered Fitzhenry. And how do you like her?—Very well, ſaid the moſt paſſionate of lovers, in a tone of perfect indifference.—Very well! retorted the polite Italian, repeating the words with a particular ſhrug—'Faith, my Lord, I am rejoiced it is nothing worſe than very well!

Readers,

Readers, have you never obſerved the roſe which has been opened many a day, and been buffeted by many a ſtorm, how, when its colour falls, when its leaves droop, when we conceive the gentleſt touch would ſcatter them under our feet—how it ſtill preſerves its delicacy in ruins, its ſweetneſs even in decay?—Perhaps, too, if you are very curious enquirers into the arrangements of nature, you might have ſeen blowing on the ſelf-ſame ſtalk, a roſe, in all the pride of lovelineſs, ſeeking, as itwere, a ſhelter from the too fervent ſun, or too heavy dews, beneath the drooping foliage of its maternal companion. Nature only can preſent you with the original of my picture; but you may find no unjuſt repreſentation of it on Lady Hillford's return to her company, leaning on the arm of Miſs Melmoth!—There are few women either ſo very handſome, or ſo very much the reverſe, but that dreſs may afford them ſome advantage: no adventi-

tious

tious ornaments could augment the native graces of Lady Hillford's figure; yet the extreme haſte by which ſhe endeavoured to remedy the neglect of her late toilet, had acted as a coſmetic to her complexion, and added a faint bloom to the languid white of her faded but ſtill expreſſive countenance. It was not the duties of the toilet which enlivened the cheeks and illumined the eyes of Miſs Melmoth. It was the image of Fitzhenry which had attended her thither, which had preſided in all her ideas, communicated animation to proportion, ſpirit to modeſty, and ſoul to beauty.—What divinity! cried the Count: Fitzhenry was ſtruck dumb;—he had as many ſenſes as any other man; but they were all confounded in one—he could only gaze and adore. She was ſoon obſcured from his eager ſight by the multitude of unembarraſſed votaries, who flocked about her, to offer, at the ſhrine of perfect levelineſs, their unmeaning homage; all

but

but Mr. Courtenay, who could not preſume to approach the being which, even to him, appeared ſomething more than mortal, becauſe he had not yet paſſed through the forms of preſentation.—What a lovely creature! ſaid he ſoftly to his friend: will not you or Lady Hillford have the goodneſs to name me to her? or am I for ever to be kept at this torturing diſtance?—Fitzhenry immediately preſented him.—At the name of Melmoth, which was the firſt time Courtenay had ever heard it mentioned but in the way of confidence, his amazement was ſo great, that he ſtarted, coloured, heſitated, and was ſo totally confounded, as to pay his compliments with much leſs grace than he was accuſtomed to offer them. Perhaps, had not Fitzhenry known that his inclinations were engaged another way, from theſe appearances he might have ſet him down as a rival, in which light he already conſidered the Count de Ferranda, and was al-

moſt

moſt diſpoſed to do the ſame by every other man who but looked towards her.

Lord Hillford joined them at table: he paid the moſt flattering attention to Fitzhenry, was particularly gracious to Mr. Courtenay, and with an art peculiar to himſelf, gained upon the eſteem of thoſe who knew, from ſad experience, how impoſſible it was that he ſhould ever deſerve their good opinion. Lady Hillford's invariable rule, ſince her marriage, was to produce only ſmiles and good humour before the friends of her huſband, concealing her tears, her bitter retroſpections, with caution ſo entirely guarded as prevented the keen eye of penetration from diſcovering that her ingenuous boſom harboured ſuch gloomy gueſts; they were never ſuffered to appear, ſhe only made them the companions of her pillow or her cloſet. —On this day they ſeemed to have taken their flight altogether, on the re-

union

union to one part of her family, a happineſs ſhe conſidered as beyond her hopes. What an event!—to find the ſon of that brother whom ſhe had never ceaſed to adore, ſo noble, ſo generous, ſo handſome, ſo amiable: above all, ſo ſteadily the lover of Miſs Melmoth:—how flattering!—it hurried back to her heart a ſort of ſentiment, the return of which was rendered more welcome by its long eſtrangement; it was a ſentiment of felicity, attended by all its pleaſant *ſatellites*, contentment, eaſe, vivacity, hope, joy, and good humour. She had never, ſince ſhe gave her hand to Lord Hillford, exhibited ſuch variable and fine talents, as on this day; he ſeemed to think ſo himſelf; he was not the laſt to ſignify his admiration. His attentions to her were ſo ſtrongly marked with reſpect and affection, that Fitzhenry, ſufficiently elated by the ſituation he had gained next to Miſs Melmoth at table, was willing to make every ſort of allowance

ance for his Lordſhip's former conduct, and to eſtabliſh him hereafter in the claſs of thoſe friends whoſe favourable opinion he wiſhed to ſecure.

After dinner, the Princeſs Maritinda propoſed, that the whole party ſhould go to the opera, ſup with her, and the next morning make an excurſion to her country ſeat, twelve miles from Naples, where ſhe would confine them, at leaſt a fortnight, ſhe ſaid to do penance for thoſe little amiable errors which did not come under the cognizance of the church.—It was a charming propoſal, made by a charming perſon, and adopted in all its branches; the opera, the ſupper, and the excurſion ſucceeded to each other. The retirement of this Princeſs might have been called the palace of delights, where every ſort of innocent pleaſure reigned in its turn, and held captive the laughing hours which were running too faſt for their purſuit.

purſuit. The villa *converſaziones* were not diſgraced by frivolity, or its amuſements rendered dangerous by magnificent levity; the former had its foundation in rationality, the latter in ſimplicity: their ſubjects were improving, their ſports rural, and the happy gueſts univerſally charmed with each other.

What golden opportunities were here laid in the way of Fitzhenry, and with what avidity did he ſeize on them all!—he was ſucceſsful in his application to his aunt for her intereſt with Miſs Melmoth; it was at the command of Lady Hillford, and in her preſence, that ſhe received with a noble frankneſs the offer of a heart which came ſo reſpectably recommended to her acceptance: nor was Lady Hillford the only confidant of his happineſs—Lord Hillford had alſo found the way to his confidence; and without explaining the ſhare his aunt had taken

to

to promote his felicity, he pretty well explained to him every other part of his ſituation. He acted in this particular very contrary to the counſel of his friend Courtenay; but there was no withſtanding the inſinuating devices of his Lordſhip, who, whilſt he profeſſed himſelf entirely on the ſide of Fitzhenry, expreſſed ſome fears on account of Wardour's prior claim, and told him, with many additions, what he had before heard from his aunt, as paſſing between Lady Wardour and himſelf, when ſhe placed Miſs Melmoth under his protection. My dear Fitzhenry, he added, notwithſtanding I am a Catholic, nay biaſſed to my opinions, and Miſs Melmoth of the ſame faith with myſelf, yet I have ſo great a friendſhip for your father, with ſuch perfect affection for his ſon, that I promiſe to become your advocate with Lady Wardour, and through her medium to move Mrs. Melmoth in your

your favour, on the conſideration only that you, in return for my good offices, engage to let me conduct you through the whole of this difficult buſineſs—Yes, my dear boy, there are many difficulties which you do not foreſee, but which muſt be removed; depend on my aſſiſtance in helping you to ſurmount them: but will you fulfil the conditions I offer?—Will you be governed by me, when to ſpeak, and when to be ſilent?—Will you do nothing without firſt conſulting me? I am aſſuming the rights of a father, but I am going to give you a ſingular proof that I deſerve your confidence.

Fitzhenry ſatisfied all his demands—his temper was too ardent to reſt a moment in ſuſpence when he could arrive at certainty by any poſſible means ſhort of diſhonour. Lord Hillford embraced him, and purſued the converſation.

Your

Your very ſhort acquaintance, ſaid he, with the late Lord Wardour muſt have given you an imperfect view, at the beſt, into his real character; he was certainly a good man, but the predominant features of his mind were nevertheleſs ambition and avarice.—Governed by theſe foibles, can you conceive, Fitzhenry, he would have encouraged a union for his ſon, which came unattended by either of theſe flattering recommendations? No—in my conference with Lady Wardour, I was better informed of the true value of that jewel ſhe entruſted to my keeping: and as it ſeems her affections are favourable to you, though intended for another, I would rather betray the ſecret repoſed with me, than that you ſhould be mutually diſappointed.——Know then, the little obſcure portionleſs Miſs Melmoth, however beautiful, however eſtimable, would have found no protector in the father of your rival; he would

not have ſecluded her from the admiration of all mankind, to force his ſon on her acceptance, on the ſcore of her beauty or good qualities: on the contrary, he would have diſinherited his heir, had he preſumed to beſtow himſelf on a pretty low-born beggar.

Fitzhenry looked aghaſt, and deſired his Lordſhip would haſten to unfold the myſtery:—Yes, ſaid Lord Hillford, I am ready to explain it, if on this ſpot you make an irrevocable oath never to betray the ſecret to my wife, or to the perſon whom you call Miſs Melmoth. Fitzhenry ſwore, and Lord Hillford proceeded—Now liſten to me without interruption, and ſhare the information which I received from Lady Wardour—Heaven forgive me if I am guilty of a breach of truſt; it is for your ſake I forfeit my honour, to your keeping I confide its future ſecurity. To the name of Melmoth, continued his Lordſhip after a

pauſe, the lady in queſtion, I underſtand, has no right, whatever the claims of her attendant, or her aunt as ſhe is called, may be to it. Lady Wardour's intelligence did not extend to that particular, or indeed to the real name of the perſon ſuppoſed to be her niece; ſhe only thought it neceſſary to inform me that her lovely ward was the daughter of a Britiſh peer, who, having determined on her intermarrying in their family, and being eccentric in his humour, had ſent the child to be brought up under their eye, with the ridiculous determination of never acknowledging her for the heireſs of his immenſe riches, until ſhe had eſpouſed the young man with whom ſhe was educated, and by whoſe parents ſhe had been foſtered.

Fitzhenry forgot his order of ſilence, and exclaimed—Heavens! what a diſcovery is this, and how indeed will it increaſe my difficulties!—I am loſt, in-

fallibly loſt, without your Lordſhip's aſſiſtance!—Tell me the name of this unnatural father, my dear Lord, that I may throw myſelf at his feet, and ſwear in his preſence, never, never to reſign his angel daughter!—nor Wardour, nor any man exiſting ſhall tear her from the heart of Fitzhenry!

Lord Hillford ſmiled at his impetuoſity, and calmly replied, you tax my friendſhip, young man, beyond its abilities: the name of her father at preſent reſts with Lady Wardour, and Lady Wardour muſt never know that I have diſcloſed any part of the curious hiſtory with which ſhe intruſted me; be you therefore ſilent, and leave your intereſt in my hands. When Lady Wardour has given up the name of Lady Olivia's father to my importunities, do you imagine it ſhall be concealed from you? or have you no better faith in my profeſſions, than to ſuppoſe I ſhall not myſelf become your advocate with him?

Pene-

Penetrated with gratitude, the too ſanguine Fitzhenry bent his knee, and renewed his former aſſurances of the ſtricteſt obedience to all his commands. Lord Hillford ſeemed affected by his tranſports, and bluſhed as he raiſed him from the ground. I have told you, ſaid he, her Chriſtian name, and the title to which it is annexed: but recollect that, on the forfeiture of my friendſhip, you are to forget there is ſuch a woman in the world as Lady Olivia; for until I am able to inform you of her other pretenſions to name and rank, you muſt think only of Miſs Melmoth. Before Fitzhenry could finiſh his reply to this laſt injunction, Mr. Courtenay entered the apartment; he held a packet of letters in his hand—theſe are for you, my Lord, preſenting them to his friend—open them, I beſeech you, that I may have the ſatisfaction of knowing the accounts you get from your family are not quite ſo gloomy

as what I have received from my own. Lord Hillford had taken himſelf out of the room by another door, whilſt Fitzhenry remained buried in thought; but hearing Courtenay urge his intreaties in accents of ſadneſs, he ſtarted, looked at him, ſaw his face overſpread with dejection, and eagerly demanded the cauſe from whence it ſprung.

Many are the cauſes, replied Mr. Courtenay, the leaſt of which, had it come ſingly, would have overwhelmed me.—Doctor Burnet is no more;—my father is indiſpoſed; dangerouſly, I fear:—I am commanded home; and in half an hour, dear Fitzhenry, I ſhall have the unutterable ſorrow of bidding you adieu! The only ſolace I ſhall feel on this inevitable ſeparation, is to know that I leave you with relations to whom you are attached; with a miſtreſs you adore, and friends who will be happy to

do

do you ſervice.—Fitzhenry entered into his full ſhare of thoſe diſtreſſes of which he could not but partake, and there was only one conſideration that would have detained him in Italy:—to leave Miſs Melmoth behind—how impoſſible!—for her ſake he would not merely have renounced the ſociety of Courtenay, but of all mankind.

The whole party at the Princeſs Maritinda's, which would naturally have been diſſolved thenext day, expreſſed a great deal of concern when informed that one of its moſt agreeable members had deſerted. Fitzhenry performed the duties of ceremony for his friend—which (the family being all gone out when his carriage was ready) he could not wait to perform himſelf. The only perſon of whom he might have taken leave, was Lady Hillford; ſhe being confined to the houſe by a ſlight cold, could have received his adieus; but it was thought

beſt not to inform her of Doctor Burnet's death, till her diſorder ſhould be removed. Mr. Courtenay, was aware that in the abſence of her Lord ſhe would aſk him ſuch queſtions reſpecting the health of her venerable friend, as would make it impoſſible for him to conceal what had happened; and for that reaſon, with Fitzhenry's perfect concurrence, he avoided the painful interview.

After the departure of Courtenay for Britain, Lord Hillford invited Fitzhenry to be the gueſt of his family; but though of all ſituations it was the one his heart would have elected, yet from the pureſt motives of delicacy he declined it, contenting himſelf with being the conſtant viſitor of his aunt and Miſs Melmoth, attending them aſſiduouſly on all their parties, whether at home or abroad.—Though he loved the one and adored the other, yet ſo boundleſs was his credulity, ſo ſtrong his infatuation for

ſor the counſel of Lord Hillford, that he would not admit even his own wiſhes or his own reaſon to be the guide of his actions: he was not interdicted from ſometimes ſpeaking of his paſſion to Miſs Melmoth, but he was adviſed to uſe the opportunities thrown in his way ſparingly; to mix as much indifference with the ſubject as he could command, and by no means to let her perceive the extent of her own powers; otherwiſe his Lordſhip begged to decline having any further hand in promoting their happineſs, which could never be accompliſhed without his making this trifling ſacrifice to artifice.—Fitzhenry had a ſoul that diſdained every ſpecies of deception, but he had alſo a heart which would have burſt with agony at the final diſappointment of his tendereſt hopes. If Lord Hillford ceaſed to be his friend—would he not be his enemy? It depended on him to eſtabliſh his hopes, or to aboliſh them. The riſk of

ſuch an alternative was too great for experiment; and he adopted the ſyſtem, rather than loſe the prize.

Miſs Melmoth could not but ſee the change in his conduct, yet her own never betrayed diſpleaſure or caprice at ſo unaccountable a revolution. She might have retaliated—ſhe might have repaid his negligence, which was political, by pouring into his paſſionate mind the real anguiſh of jealouſy. She had all poſſible opportunities of tormenting him, but uſed none of them. The admiration ſhe created was unſought-for; and the propoſals ſhe would not accept, neither infected her manners with coquetry, nor filled her heart with vanity. The Count de Ferranda was amongſt thoſe who were unſucceſsful candidates; he loved her with ſincerity; he endeavoured to find a cure in abſence, and haſtened to Rome, hoping the pleaſures of the Carnival might re-

ſtore

ſtore him to his ſenſes, which he could not but conſider as a little deranged before they had perſuaded him to enter the liſts with ſuch a competitor as Fitzhenry; for with all his Lordſhip's caution, the Count was too keen-ſighted not to have penetrated into his ſecret. He called to take leave of him the morning on which he left Naples: I do not hate you, ſaid he: for the advantages you have gained over me, but I can ſtay no longer to be mortified by your triumphs. The other pretended not to underſtand the ſolution of this reproach. Ah, replied he, you are not half a lover; examine the eyes of Miſs Melmoth, read there the ſentence of your happineſs and my miſery; for her ſake I will never attach myſelf to any thing that is handſome again in that ungrateful ſex, as long as I live. I am going to ſeek out the uglieſt woman Italy has to boaſt; and when I have found her, I will be her faithful *Ciciſbeo*, till I

am

am grey-headed, and paſt the ſeaſon of temptation. Any other man than an Italian would have been ſad at a diſappointment that had really touched his heart; but the happy ſons of that happy climate think no evil ſo terrible to bear as melancholy; they ſhun it as the peſt of exiſtence; theirs is the allegro of life; Britons delight only in the penſeroſo.

Lord Hillford was now never to be met with out of the family party; and he watched every word, every motion of Fitzhenry, with ſo jealous a ſcrutiny, as wrapped all his advances to Miſs Melmoth in a veil of conſtraint which was far from graceful, and which Lady Hillford could hardly conſider as ſtrictly honourable. She adored her nephew, but there was not that being upon the earth, who could diſpute the firſt place in her affections with Miſs Melmoth; ſhe ſaw her ſpirits on the decline, and did not ſee it in a light advantageous to Fitzhenry.

She

She ſought for an opportunity of ſpeaking to him alone; but her Lord, with a ſpecies of addreſs entirely his own, prevented a private interview, which would have produced an *eclairciſſement*, much to the advantage of all parties—his Lordſhip excepted—in whoſe future plans it might have cauſed ſome confuſion.

His Jeſuitical politics had made him name to Fitzhenry ſeveral curious objects worthy the attention of travellers, which, although at no great diſtance from Naples, were ſituated ſo far apart from each other, that to perform the excurſion could not take him up leſs than a fortnight. His heart recoiled at the thoughts of ſo tedious a ſeparation from its lovely and beloved miſtreſs; but on the aſſumption of paternal authority, which he had permitted Lord Hillford to take upon himſelf, there was no reſiſting his commands, without loſing his friendſhip, regarded by poor Fitzhenry as the polar ſtar, by which

which only he could be guided to the haven of his felicity. The plan was propoſed ſoon after they returned to Naples from the Princeſs Maritinda's villa, but no time was then fixed for carrying it into execution; and as the ſubject had not been renewed for ſo many weeks, our ſanguine lover began to flatter himſelf the whole of it was forgotten or given up, as not ſo very neceſſary a purſuit as it had been at firſt repreſented. He found this cradle of credulity ſo exceedingly conducive to his repoſe, that fears and reluctance were all rocked aſleep, till rouſed from the treacherous ſecurity by Lord Hillford's aſſuring him now was the ſeaſon for the expedition ſo long premeditated; to which he added, that three young gentlemen, who were much in his family, profeſſed favourites of Fitzhenry, had promiſed to be the companions of his ſhort tour, and that every thing would be ready for their departure on the morrow.—Lady Hillford turned pale—Fitz-

henry

henry ſighed—his eyes ſettled on Miſs Melmoth—ſhe read in them volumes of tender queſtions, and her delicate cheeks anſwered every one of them in red letters.—Lord Hillford was particularly complacent, ſaid ſomething ſo well adapted to the ſentiments of each, that the harmony which had ſuffered a momentary interruption ſeemed to be reſtored; and the next day, having taken leave of his Aunt and Miſs Melmoth—in the preſence of his ſelf-nominated Guardian—Fitzhenry with his companions and attendants ſet out on their excurſion; whilſt Lord Hillford, whoſe thoughts had been a good deal ſcattered, for the benefit of collecting them walked towards the Port, where he expected to enjoy the voluptuous feaſt of contemplation, without being liable to the obſervation of curious, or the intruſion of idle inquirers.—But deeply as he was engaged with his own private affairs, he could not help taking notice of a very

beautiful

beautiful young lady who ſeemed plunged in difficulties, how ſhe ſhould ſtep from the boat to the Port, though a child of ſix years old might have paſſed it with eaſe. He flew to offer her his hand, and having aſſiſted her out, ſhe ſaid he was very obliging, in terrible bad Italian; when another female, whom he had not obſerved before, begged his pardon that ſhe could not ſpeak Italian like Miſs Owen, but that if he happened to underſtand any thing about Engliſh, ſhe hoped he would accept her thanks for having perhaps ſaved the life of an heireſs, her daughter, and poor Sir Ogle Owen's own child, who had ſhe died of the fright, or ſunk down into the ſea in ſtepping out of the boat, all her riches could not have ſaved her—obſerving that young ladies were as much in the way of accidents, though they had fourteen ſervants on board the ſame veſſel, and two hundred thouſand pounds to their fortune, as thoſe who had not five hundred to bleſs themſelves with.—But I

ſee,

ſee, Sir, you do not underſtand any language but your own, becauſe you make me no anſwer:—don't let that make you uneaſy; for I ſhall have a maſter as ſoon as Miſs Owen and I have dined, and when we meet again, I ſhall be able to thank you, ſo as to be underſtood.

I beg your pardon, Madam, replied Lord Hillford: it was only my reſpect for your Ladyſhip that would not permit me to interrupt you, or I ſhould ſooner have had the honour to boaſt myſelf of the ſame nation with Lady Owen and her exquiſitely beautiful daughter.—Miſs Owen was going to make ſome return to this well-applied compliment, but the fatigue of opening her lips and dragging out her words had taken up ſo much time in the operation, that her mother, who was always ready, replied for her, that though he was the politeſt gentleman ſhe had ever met with in any foreign country, ſhe durſt to ſay, he would hardly know

Miſs

Miſs Owen if he was to ſee her when ſhe was dreſſed, and had been only riding in a coach; but ſhips were ſo illconvenient that no complexion could ſtand it.

Lord Hillford admired the daughter, but could not tell what to make of the mother; he ogled the one, and was too well bred to laugh at the other. They were ſtanding on the quay whilſt this converſation was paſſing; he put them in mind of getting cold, and requeſted to have the honour of ſeeing them to their hotel. Here Miſs Owen was in great luck; for before my Lady could find courage to tell his Lordſhip that their hotel was yet to ſeek, ſhe had time to ſay that, before her mother could poſſibly give him any further trouble, ſhe hoped he would declare to whom they had already been ſo amazingly indebted. —Oh dear! cried my Lady Owen, I wonder I forgot to aſk that queſtion myſelf;

ſelf; but then it is as well, ſince Miſs Owen have done it for me.—Lord Hillford did not keep them a moment in ſuſpenſe—Well, exclaimed the tranſported widow of Sir Ogle, in a voice exalted rather above her common whiſpering tone, it is the ſtrangeſt good luck, that, go where I will, I always meet with people of my own condition! and when Miſs Owen writes to my Lady Ducheſs of Radſtock, the Counteſs of Fenton, the Counteſs of Uxington, Lady Betty, Lady Bab and Lady Whatd'ycall'ems, this here meeting by chance as one may ſay, may be ſomething for her to write about. Young ladies, my Lord, if they ben't always meeting with adventures, poor things, they don't know what for to write about at all: not but if we had never met with your Lordſhip, Miſs Owen would have found plenty of news to entertain all her friends when we once get to the Carnival in Rome. She then aſked whether his

Lordſhip

Lordſhip could give them any directions where they might find Lord Fitzhenry, adding, I believe I may venture for to ſay he would ſoon fly to pay his reſpects to Miſs Owen, if he did but know ſhe is come over in the Hopeful, captain Mandrake.—As ſhe finiſhed the obſervation, they came to the door of an hotel, to which they were recommended and conducted by his Lordſhip, who, on a very ſudden foundation, had already begun to build edifices, much to the advantage of his preſent and future projects: he attended the ladies to their appartment, and by his polite aſſiduities made them ſo much his debtors, that Miſs Owen, fatigued with abundant acknowledgments, retired to take ſome repoſe; and her mother, being left alone with his Lordſhip, repaid his condeſcenſion with the whole treaſure of her confidence, in which he found much to congratulate himſelf, and returned home very well pleaſed with his morning adventure,

venture, firſt promiſing his new acquaintance that the ladies of his family would on the ſame afternoon have the honour of making them a viſit; which promiſe, it may be ſuppoſed, was punctually performed.

Fitzhenry followed the route that had been laid down for him by Lord Hillford; weather, roads, accommodation, the vivacity of his two companions, every thing combined to give this excurſion an appearance of pleaſure. Fitzhenry ſaw Miſs Melmoth in whatever was beautiful by nature, or maſterly by art: her image brightened or obſcured every object that paſſed under his examination; if the ſun concealed itſelf behind a cloud, he recalled to his memory the milder, ſofter beams of her eyes, and wiſhed no other luminary to direct or cheer him; the fineſt ſculpture wanted the proportion of her figure; and the pureſt marble the whiteneſs of her ſkin; ſhe

ſhe was the conſtant theme of his thoughts, but never of his converſation; the gaiety of his humour equalled the tenderneſs of his heart; and thoſe ſecret delights, ſo dear to himſelf, were of courſe no burden to his friends. Having ſeen all that was worthy obſervation; they were returning back to Naples by another road than that by which they left it, becauſe it had been repreſented by Lord Hillford to his nephew, as the ſhorteſt way home; a more than ſufficient cauſe for his giving it the preference to all others, notwithſtanding the two gentlemen who travelled with him endeavoured to diſſuade him from his purpoſe, on account of the very bad accommodations they ſhould be ſure to meet with in a track ſo little frequented. They might as well have preached to the winds, as to a lover ſo impatient; they therefore ſuffered him to take the lead, and the firſt part of their journey paſſed on pleaſantly enough. The laſt night

night they ſhould have occaſion to ſleep on the road, there was only one wretched hovel that offered itſelf for their accommodation, ſo ſmall that their attendants could not be received into it; the poſtillions lay down with their horſes in a ſtable comparatively better than the houſe; whilſt the other ſervants thought themſelves well off, as they crept in, for their night's repoſe, to the carriages deſerted by their maſters. The two Italian gentlemen were forced to put up with one room between them—if a cupboard of eight feet ſquare deſerves ſo to be called. Fitzhenry had another to himſelf, of ſtill leſs dimenſions. They were all fatigued; the luxuries of the table did not invite them to lengthen out their repaſt; it alſo took but a ſhort time to empty the laſt two bottles of the wine they brought with them from Naples; all that the landlord produced was execrable in its kind, and they agreed to ſeparate at an early hour.—Whether

Fitzhenry

Fitzhenry had been to ſtretch himſelf on down or on ſtraw, he would not have taken poſſeſſion of his bed till his memory had retraced every perfection of Miſs Melmoth, till he had thought over her thouſand charms, her thouſand graces;—the catalogue was a long one, and his companions were faſt aſleep before he had got half through it. Then followed the train of difficulties which had been opened to his view by Lord Hillford: vain wiſhes that ſhe had been the daughter of a peaſant, rather than a peer: calculations altogether as vain on the good offices of his Lordſhip to remove the impediments that obſtructed his ſucceſs, and ſome raſh reſolves againſt all rivals who might oppoſe him; particularly Wardour, of whom he could not but own to himſelf, the ſhare he had in Miſs Melmoth's good opinion was already ſomething more than he was willing to allow him. Theſe mixed cogitations brought it to twelve o'clock, and he was

not

not yet undreſſed. There was only one chair in the room, on which he had laid his piſtols; the candle had burnt down in the ſocket, and been many minutes extinguiſhed, before he found out that he was ſitting on the ſide of his bed in darkneſs. What at laſt awakened him to a recollection of his ſituation, was the ſound of feet near the door: it had only a latch that opened on the outſide, to ſecure it; and hearing voices as well as ſteps, he thought it time to put himſelf on his guard; he gently laid hold on the piſtols, and, with one in each hand, retired behind the door, which, as it opened, muſt effectually conceal him, coolly reſolving to diſcharge neither of them till aſſured it was deſign, and not accident, that brought him viſitors at an hour ſo unſeaſonable: he liſtened—the noiſe by which he had been alarmed was converted to the ſtillneſs of ſilence;—he peeped through a crevice in the door—no light appeared

—yet fortunately theſe tokens of ſafety made no abatement in the neceſſary caution of ſelf-preſervation; he ſtood with his back to the wall, his piſtols cocked, and his right arm extended—upwards of fifteen minutes, ſuch was his attitude; at the end of which time he diſtinctly heard the voices of more than two or three men talking very low: again he turned his eye to the crevice, and ſaw four aſſaſſins; one of them carried a dark lantern, his face was covered with a crape; the other three were eagerly concealing theirs under the ſame diſguiſe;—he who held the lantern held alſo the naked daggers of his confederates, doubtleſs to leave their hands at liberty to aſſiſt themſelves. One of theſe wretches ſaid to another, All is huſh! but are you ſure we have the right game in view—that we may not have the ſame buſineſs to do over again gratis? He to whom the queſtion was addreſſed, replied, he knew the perſon of Lord Fitzhenry

Fitzhenry too well to take a wrong aim, and confirmed his aſſeveration with an oath. Had the beſieged ruſhed upon them, their daggers would have been dipped in his blood; he did better for his own ſafety; true courage has much advantage over that ſort of reſolution inſpired by terror: one is cool and deliberate—the other raſh and precipitate. He had felt that the door which ſeparated him from the ruffians, was little thicker than paper; and taking his aim through the crevice at him who held the inſtruments of death, he diſcharged his piece: —the man, together with the weapons, fell to the ground; and before the confederates had time to rally, or could ſtoop to take up their arms, he burſt upon them, placed his foot on the daggers, and lodged the contents of his other piſtol in the breaſt of a ſecond, which laid him ſprawling by the ſide of his companion: the two who remained ſteady to their murderous purpoſe, un-

daunted by the fate of their colleagues, would have closed with him, perhaps might have overpowered his strength, but that the alarm had already awakened the Italian gentlemen, who hastened to his assistance. Their approaching steps and distant voices procured his freedom; —the villains let go their hold;—one of them struck him a blow on his temple, which laid him low; when both darting into the chamber, made their escape through the casement, and, though pursued by one of the gentlemen, together with the whole of their attendants, they were no more heard of.—Fitzhenry, who had been only stunned by the blow, soon recovered his senses. The countenances of the dead assassins were examined, when one of them was discovered to be their landlord; the features of the other could not be traced. They ordered their carriage to be immediately got ready, and set their faces towards Naples, where they meant to give immediate

mediate information to the police, that the affair might undergo a proper inveſtigation.

Fitzhenry was adviſed by his two friends never to go out ſignly or unarmed, as long as he found it neceſſary to ſtay in that part of the country: You are a marked man, ſaid they, and the rival, who hired theſe murderers to diſpatch you, will not be ſatisfied till your death is accompliſhed. The reply he made to this obſervation was ſhort, and the caution it was meant to convey a good deal confuſed him: he was unwilling to commit himſelf to the confidence of any man, except Lord Hillford; but ſo much had the implication of a rival given his paſſions the alarm, that, inſtead of entering into converſation with them, he retired to his own perturbated recollection for a leading trait by which he might diſcover the inhuman daſtard who could find no track to the poſſeſſion of Miſs

Melmoth but by the blood of a fellow creature. His ſilent reſearches were in vain, and his imagination was obliged to give up the purſuit. Many had declared themſelves the adorers of Miſs Melmoth; but the deed of aſſaſſination was ſo monſtrous, that his honeſt nature would fix it on none of them; his uncle, he hoped, might be more ſucceſsful, and to him he propoſed to refer the difficult ſcrutiny.

It was quite dark before they entered Naples; the blow on his temple, which at firſt gave him no pain, began to be troubleſome; inſtead of going directly into the preſence of his charming miſtreſs, as he had intended—the fear of alarming her and his aunt—for his face was much diſcoloured—made him get out at his own houſe, and ſend a meſſage to Lord Hillford, requeſting that he might have the honour of ſeeing him as ſoon as poſſible.

More

More quickly than he had reaſon to believe his ſervant could have returned with a reply from his Lordſhip, his Lordſhip himſelf appeared, to anſwer the ſummons:—he embraced him with extravagant marks of fondneſs;—he even ſhed tears; and thoſe tears, he condeſcended to aſſure Fitzhenry, were ſtrangers to his eyes, which no leſs joy than at his marvellous preſervation from the hands of aſſaſſins could have invited to ſhew themſelves. But, ſaid he, my dear boy, I have only heard of this execrable deed in part—your ſervant has told it incoherently—I muſt have it explained; I muſt know every particular, that I may find out the villains who would have perpetrated thy murder, and the ſcoundrel who employed them.

Fitzhenry expreſſed great gratitude for his Lordſhip's fervency; but begged, before he entered on the detail, that he might be firſt permitted to enquire how

his aunt did, to aſk if Miſs Melmoth was as well as when he left her, and whether they knew any thing of the accident which had nearly deprived him of ever ſeeing either of them again. No, no, replied his Lordſhip, haſtily, they know nothing of the matter; we will talk of them hereafter. My impatience can be ſatisfied with nothing leſs than the whole and immediate relation of your late adventure.

His Lordſhip had aſked for the repreſentation of a ſcene, the rehearſal of which ſeemed to afflict him with more terrors than the oſtenſible actor himſelf had been ſubjected to, even in the moſt ſerious moment of action. Lord Hillford examined the hurt on his nephew's temple, and ſent away for a ſurgeon;—nor, till he arrived, could he be prevailed upon to anſwer any queſtion whatever, but walked about the room like a man more than half diſtracted.

The

The ſurgeon came, and appeaſed his fears by the ſimple aſſurance that there were at preſent no appearances of dange in Lord Fitzhenry's hurt; but by all means adviſed that he ſhould go to bed, keep himſelf quiet for two or three days, neither ſpeak much, or be much ſpoken to, particularly on any topic that was likely to engage his attention; telling the anxious uncle apart, that, if theſe injunctions were not complied with, there might attendant conſequences be apprehended, which, if leſs fatal than death, might to his friends be much more alarming. Having drawn ſome blood from his patient's arm, and repeated his orders, he withdrew, leaving him to the care of Lord Hillford.

What blockheads are theſe pretenders to ſkill! ſaid his Lordſhip, as ſoon as they were left alone: if the fellow had ordered thee, Fitzhenry, any thing but to keep thy bed, and hold thy tongue,

I ſhould have conceived a better opinion of his underſtanding.

And I, returned the invalid, with an air of gaiety equal to his own, am ſo far diſinclined to follow either of his preſcriptions, that I am ready to attend your Lordſhip home this moment, there to poſſeſs the reality of happineſs:—if I ſtay where I am, and do as I am bid, what can I graſp but the mere ſhadow of it, the interrupted bliſs of unſubſtantial viſions?

No, ſaid his Lordſhip, you muſt not go home with me, but I am in no haſte to leave you; I have queſtions to aſk, and communications to make, which, as I foreſee not the harm they can do your health, muſt no longer be deferred:—have your ſuſpicions yet lighted on any particular perſon as the inſtigator of the miſchief, from which you have ſo fortunately eſcaped?

I am

I am utterly at a loſs, he replied, on whom to fix them:—if I have rivals whoſe ſouls are ſo baſe, I know nothing of them:—if I have enemies, they are not of my own making;—I have injured no man: whom then dare I accuſe?

Lord Hillford pauſed;—I am conſidering, ſaid he;—and pauſed again;—no, it is impoſſible it ſhould be either of them. Wardour may be—De Ferranda undoubtedly is—the lover of Lady Olivia; but they are both men of exquiſite honour.—I know it, interrupted Fitzhenry, and I ſhould equally ſuſpect myſelf of being a villain—or you, my Lord,—as affix that title on Wardour or De Ferranda.

You are in the right, replied the noble uncle, catching him in his arms, whilſt his face glowed with admiration of ſo worthy a ſentiment, or from ſome other unknown cauſe;—you are perfectly

fectly in the right;—there are many other pretenders to the favour of your miſtreſs, whom we will conſider hereafter; at preſent I require as great a proof of your philoſophy, as you have juſt now given of your candour.—Can you ſupport the idea of beholding Miſs Melmoth no more?

Behold her no more! repeated Fitzhenry, with a frantic wildneſs of expreſſion;—behold Miſs Melmoth no more!

I do not mean to threaten perpetual baniſhment, but you will think two, perhaps three months, almoſt perpetual. I know the weakneſs of reaſon, when it contends with the ſtrength of paſſions: and even for this ſhort ſeparation, I call upon you to be armed with fortitude.

Ah! cried Fitzhenry, do not, my Lord, ſport with my anxiety, but let me ſee

ſee at one view the whole extent of my misfortune.

The proſpect, he returned, is not ſo boundleſs, but you might, by exerting your reſolution, conſider it without terror. Lady Olivia is no longer under the protection of my wife: in your abſence Lady Wardour came to fetch her away —I believe by the commands of her father; though who that father is, I am ſtill unable to inform you—Lady Wardour is bound to ſilence, and, without his permiſſion, cannot betray who he is, or where is his reſidence.

Fitzhenry's countenance had changed from the beginning of this converſation, and it now ſeemed that the intelligence he received from Lord Hillford was likely to complete the work that his aſſaſſins had left unfiniſhed; for, in trying to give the feelings of his tortured ſoul utterance, he ſtarted from his ſeat, reeled towards

towards Lord Hillford, but before he could form any thing ſimilar to a word —voice, expreſſion, ſenſe, motion, all forſook him, and he fell with ſuch violence to the ground, that his Lordſhip very much alarmed called out for aſſiſtance, helped him to bed, nor quitted his ſide for the reſt of the night. He did not think it neceſſary to ſummon any of the faculty to his aid, depending wholly on his own management. Alas! let the will be ever ſo good, lords and nurſes are ſeldom the beſt phyſicians: an old woman thinks it her duty to give any ſort of food to her patient for which his appetite happens to crave, be the nature of it ever ſo pernicious; and a lord, with a view to make the object of his care paſs the dull ſleepleſs hours of night, may comply with his importunities, by communicating ſuch ſort of hiſtories as will totally unfit him for repoſe. This was exactly the caſe with Lord Hillford, who, on Fitzhenry's return to his

ſenſes,

ſenſes, could not find in his heart to refuſe the eager requeſt he made him, to be informed of every thing that concerned Miſs Melmoth. The ſtory was a long one, and ſo often interrupted, that when day peeped in at the window, there was ſtill ſomething to add to it.—He gave Fitzhenry to underſtand that Lady Wardour's viſit was quite unexpected; that his wife was inconſolable at parting from her young friend, who ſeemed to participate of her regret; and the ſeparation between them was ſo afflicting, that, in hopes a change of ſcene, with the Carnival feſtivities, might help to baniſh her melancholy, he had prevailed with Lady Hillford to join a family who were on their way to Rome; himſelf remaining behind for no other purpoſe than to conduct him thither—or, ſaid his Lordſhip, when you are ſufficiently recovered to go in purſuit of Olivia or her father, if that ſhould be your deſign, I ſhall leave you at liberty to follow

which-

whichever plan will moſt conduce to your own peace of mind.

But whither ſhall I purſue? where ſeek them? cried Fitzhenry, his hands claſped, his eyes cloſed, and his whole ſoul under the excruciating tortures of ſuſpenſe.

I wiſh I could direct you exactly where you might find them, replied his Lordſhip: but though that is not in my power, I can tell you that, if Lady Wardour has not deceived me, the reſidence of Lady Olivia's father will be eſtabliſhed for a year or two either in this country, or in France, at leaſt till his daughter is diſpoſed of to his own ſatisfaction.

That then muſt be to Wardour, ſaid Fitzhenry, with a ſtern voice.

I fear

I fear as much, replied Lord Hillford: but be compoſed; and when you are ſtrong enough to leave your houſe, I will not only give you a direction to the place where you may ſoon come up with Lady Wardour and my late fair charge, but alſo ſuch a letter as ſhall ſecure you a polite reception from the preſent guardians of your miſtreſs, I mean the Dowager and Mrs. Melmoth. I would not adviſe you to this ſtep in your preſent irritable diſpoſition, if I did not know there can be no chance that you and Lord Wardour ſhould happen to meet; his mother has informed me he is gone back to his houſe, ſomewhere in Wales, I think ſhe ſaid, on buſineſs of conſequence, which would detain him many months.

It matters not what reply Fitzhenry made to the inſinuation of his ſafety in regard to a meeting with Wardour: had it been deficient in ſpirit, his eyes would have

have given the lie to his tongue. He joyfully embraced the propoſal made to him by his uncle, and entreated him to write that moment to Lady Wardour, as he was certain of being well enough to ſet off in a very few hours. This requeſt was agreed to, and nothing could be more handſomely done, had his Lordſhip been recommending to her favour and the favour of Mrs. Melmoth his own ſon, inſtead of his wife's nephew, and the ſon of a man whom he had moſt injured, and was therefore the moſt unlikely to pardon. Fitzhenry's gratitude knew no bounds: he embraced Lord Hillford at parting, promiſed to join him at Rome, as ſoon as his ſearch was ended, ordered every thing to be prepared for his journey—ſlept three hours, dreamed of Miſs Melmoth,—awoke much refreſhed, got up, dreſſed, ſtepped into his carriage, and at the end of three days, lengthened by having as many nights added to them, he arrived at ——. He

———. He alighted at an hotel, and prepared himſelf to pay his compliments to Lady Wardour, from whom he received a very cordial invitation to dine with her, on his ſending Lord Hillford's letter of credence to beſpeak him a friendly reception.

As the place had few inhabitants in it but ſuch as were there in purſuit of health, it was the eſtabliſhed cuſtom to dine at one o'clock, ſo that my hero had ſo ſhort a time to make himſelf ready to join her Ladyſhip's party, that he could find no moment to gather from inquiries of whom her family conſiſted: however, as ſhe came herſelf to fetch Miſs Melmoth from Naples, he could entertain no doubt of her being returned there; and his heart, enlivened with hope, palpitated with new emotion at every ſtep which brought him nearer to the preſence of his divinity. His face was exceedingly diſcoloured by the blow on his

his temple; it was not to be concealed; nor would he have tried to conceal it, had the diſguiſe been practicable: he was too manly to ſuppoſe the attractions of his face had any thing to do in obtaining for him the dear preference of the woman he adored; and he was romantic enough to expect, that even had he been ſtill more disfigured, the dangers he ſo lately eſcaped would give him a title to her tender commiſeration, and that he ſhould ſee the fire of her brilliant eyes extinguiſhed by the tears of ſympathy.

What is there ſo flattering as a lover's expectations; or what ſo liable to be nipped by the froſt of diſappointment? —Fitzhenry could ſcarce draw his breath as he followed the ſervant who conducted him to the apartment where Lady Wardour and Mrs. Melmoth both waited to receive him. There was ſome company who had got there before him, to whom he

he was preſented; but whilſt his ears were feaſted by the civil ſpeeches he heard addreſſed to him from every quarter, his eyes were famiſhing for a ſight of that ſupreme lovelineſs by which alone they could be fed or delighted; they had cut all his other ſenſes: his bows, his ſmiles, his expreſſions, his inquiries, and the compliments good manners forced him to return, were all nothing to them; they were directed to find out Miſs Melmoth, and not meeting her, would willingly have cloſed on all other earthly objects. Still he hoped that at table ſhe would appear: dinner was announced, but no Miſs Melmoth enlivened the circle with beauty, wit, judgment, ſmiles, and the graces—he was ſick to death—he had no appetite—but ate more than he would have eaten, had he been really hungry; becauſe he did not at all know what he was about. Mrs. Melmoth eyed him with looks of ſpleen, diſſembled under the guiſe of cunning

cunning aſſiduity—Lady Wardour, with quite a different expreſſion: ſhe ſaw his diſtreſs, and by the tenderneſs with which ſhe endeavoured to engage his attention, by the ſoothing tones of her voice, and the ſympathy of her looks, would have evinced the pity ſhe felt for his ſituation, to any obſerver leſs overwhelmed with melancholy, and leſs confuſed by the terrors of his own imagination, than the poor Fitzhenry. Even he, before they got up from table, felt the influence of her benign aſpect; he caught her eyes more than once filled with tears, and riveted on his face; his frozen hopes re-kindled at the ſpark of commiſeration which his obſervation, though tardy, had at laſt collected: he cheriſhed it in ſilence, till Mrs. Melmoth, whom he feared much more than Lady Wardour, had on ſome occaſion or other gone out of the room: he then got up, and placing himſelf at the back of her Ladyſhip's chair, ſoftly ſpoke his entreaties

entreaties that ſhe would honour him with a few moments private converſation: ſoon after ſhe made a move to retire, and her company followed the indication; ſhe ſaid nothing to Fitzhenry, but the look ſhe gave him, he thought the moſt eloquent of all looks; as it plainly bid him ſtay where he was, and told him ſhe would return again, when ſhe had diſpoſed of her friends, whoſe preſence would not be neceſſary to the conference he had himſelf invited:—he did not miſconſtrue her meaning; ſhe came back almoſt before his eager impatience had expected her return.

Well, my Lord, ſaid ſhe, preſenting him her hand as ſhe entered, and which he reſpectfully carried to his lips, let me be favoured with your commands; I have left Mrs. Melmoth to entertain my other gueſts; ſhe does not ſuſpect that I am come down to you—I would not have her ſuſpect it—our interview muſt therefore

fore be a ſhort one.—He would have knelt at her feet to thank her for the boon ſhe had ſo generouſly granted, as he perceived by her hint of Mrs. Melmoth, that her condeſcenſion had been attended with difficulties, and might ſtill coſt her ſome pains; a conſideration which ſo much enhanced the ſenſe of his obligation, that he was loſing more time in making acknowledgments, than ſhe was willing he ſhould throw away; which occaſioned her aſking, with a little precipitancy and a great deal of good nature, if the buſineſs he pretended to have with her had not a reference to Miſs Melmoth. He confeſſed the motive of his journey to ———, and the impoſſibility of leaving it, uninformed of her health and ſituation. I am diſtracted, ſaid he, by a thouſand fears, and it is only in your power to remove them:—your laſt queſtion, ſhe replied, I am forbidden to anſwer;—more depends

pends on my ſilence than I ſhall attempt to make you comprehend:—her fate is wholly, and perhaps your own in part may be, involved in that queſtion: the other I am more ready to ſatisfy: Miſs Melmoth was in perfect health when I left her, in the hands of her father:—Lord Hillford has told you that ſhe has a father, and that he is a man of condition: I dare not have ſaid ſo much had Mrs. Melmoth been preſent.

Does Miſs Melmoth know that ſhe has a father?

Yes, and that ſhe muſt henceforth be governed by his arbitrary will, from which there can be no appeal. I would not deprive you of hope; you may be more fortunate in the end than you expect from appearances; be faithful, diligent, perſevering; but above all, be patient.

He had certainly exhibited no common proof of the latter qualification in liſtening to his hard ſentence, without flying out into execrations on his own bitter diſappointments, and the cruel ſource from whence they originated. This victory over the violence of his ſenſations was not ſo much the work of reaſon, as of ſentiment. He had obſerved the character of Lady Wardour's countenance, as ſhe ſpoke to him;—there was depictured on it all that could be conceived of pity, tenderneſs, and ſincerity: he could not give up the long-harboured thought of Wardour's being his rival; yet neither from the intereſting expreſſive tones of his mother, could he ſuppoſe her to be the enemy of his paſſion for Miſs Melmoth: thrice he eſſayed to ſpeak to her on the ſubject of her ſon's views, on the duplicity of his conduct, and his eſtrangement from friendſhip, but was as often withheld by a ſentiment of reſpect for which his delicacy only was accountable.

countable. He at laſt ventured to aſk if Lord Wardour was ſtill on the Continent, to enquire after his health, and to regret that all correſpondence between them had ceaſed on the part of his Lordſhip.

Lady Wardour ſmiled; ſhe had obſerved the variety of paſſions with which he ſtruggled:—Do not, ſaid ſhe, accuſe my ſon too raſhly: when you meet, perhaps you may diſcover that you have both been equally miſled;—he is well—he is not on the Continent—he is very much your friend—and I am inclined to be the ſame, for your own ſake, as well as for his: I am going to give you undoubted proof of the great intereſt I take in whatever concerns you. Either Italy or France—ſhe was going to proceed with energy, and had taken a hold of his hand, when Mrs. Melmoth ſtalked into the room. Her kind looks and her kinder purpoſe were put to flight. She let his hand drop, and ſaid, You may

now, my Lord, preſent your adieus to Mrs. Melmoth, without returning to the company; it is better than if I had carried them for you.

Are we ſo ſoon to loſe the pleaſure of his Lordſhip's company? aſked the unwelcome intruder.

He leaves —— this evening, returned Lady Wardour in a quick accent, as if ſhe feared he might interrupt her; he is not to remain any longer in France or Italy, but to purſue his travels through other countries; and as I cannot perſuade him to change his reſolution, we have only to thank his Lordſhip for the trouble he has taken of coming ſo far out of his way to inquire after our healths, and to bid us farewel.

Her Ladyſhip's fears of being interrupted by Fitzhenry were without foundation: his confuſion and aſtoniſhment from the beginning of Lady Wardour's

addreſs to him on the entrance of Mrs. Melmoth, had transformed him into a mere ſtatue, and the further ſhe proceeded, the deeper he was plunged in difficulties to unriddle the meaning of her myſterious purpoſe: whatever it was, he determined, if hereafter it could be diſcovered, he would guide himſelf by her directions: he made his compliments as ſhort as poſſible, and hurried back to the hotel, to conſider coolly on what he could not juſt then at all comprehend; where, in obedience to what he conſidered as the commands of Lady Wardour, that he ſhould leave —— immediately, he ordered his carriage to be got ready; and in the mean time began the inveſtigation of her Ladyſhip's real meaning, which he developed after the following curious method: That Lady Wardour was friendly to his intereſt, yet, from ſome hidden cauſe or other, obliged to cover the good will ſhe bore him from the obſervation of all but himſelf; and

that he owed this concealed favour to the efforts of Lord Hillford, were the firſt facts his judgment eſtabliſhed: of courſe it followed, the perſon who paſſed for the aunt of Miſs Melmoth, muſt be the inveterate enemy of his forbidden paſſion. If he had wanted a confirmation of this truth, where could he have looked for one more fully explanatory than in the effect her preſence produced on Lady Wardour, when ſhe ſurpriſed them together? Being ſatisfied on theſe points, her everted to the words pronounced by Lady Wardour, directly preceding the entrance of Mrs. Melmoth, and theſe he repeated to himſelf more than once —"I am going to give you, ſaid ſhe, undoubted proof of the great intereſt I take in whatever concerns you—Either Italy or France"———She muſt have meant, cried Fitzhenry, that either in Italy or France is contained the precious jewel which can alone enrich the aſpect of my deſtiny. She knew I was in ſearch

of

of my treaſure. Yes, moſt generous of women! you have pointed out to my obſcured ſenſes, where I may diſcover it, and I will have no other conductor.—He was mightily ſatisfied with this deciſion on the firſt ſubject of his inquiries, and went on to the ſecond. Why, he aſked, did ſhe afterwards lay out a plan for him to purſue, which inſtead of reuniting him to, would carry him ſtill further from his beloved miſtreſs? Here appeared a blot in his calculation not eaſily got over, till inclination, which had all this time aſſiſted his deliberations, ſtepped in, and readily expunged it, by making him believe that Lady Wardour meant nothing more than to hoodwink the ſuſpicions of Mrs. Melmoth, who, if ſhe ſuppoſed him going out of the country would proclaim it to Lady Olivia's father, and by that means render a meeting between the lovers leſs impoſſible than it appeared to be, as long as her father continued to ſuſpect that he was near them, and for what

purpoſe. This was a round-about ſort of reaſoning, it muſt be confeſſed; but lovers of Fitzhenry's deſcription think nothing of galloping after their ſanguine ideas, though the road they take be ever ſo whimſical or uncertain: on the preſent occaſion they had carried him as far from the real meaning of Lady Wardour as any two things in the world could be removed from each other. There is a ſort of conviction that is alway ready to place itſelf on the ſide of error:—it ſupported Fitzhenry in his; and now nothing remained to be done, but that he ſhould go back from whence he came, acquaint Lord Hillford with all that had paſſed in confidence between himſelf and Lady Wardour, and teſtify all manner of gratitude to his Lordſhip for having procured him a friend ſo proper, ſo able, ſo willing to ſerve him; to follow this kind relative, if he ſhould be already gone, or to go with him to Rome, ſhould

he

he be ſo fortunate as to meet with him at Naples, to pay his dear aunt, whom he loved with unfeigned affection, a ſhort viſit, and afterwards to begin his ſearch, with the fixed determination never to give it over till he had attained its object.

In his journey from Naples, his mind was ſo occupied by the revolution that had happened in his love affairs, as to leave him no time to beſtow any part of his thoughts on the ſubject of his recent eſcape from the hands which would have dipped themſelves in his blood; but as he meaſured the ſame way back, in paſſing a hovel reſembling that in which the aſſaſſination was attempted, every circumſtance of it recurred to his memory, and he even thought he ſhould know the wretch who ſtruck him the blow on his temple, if he ſhould ever ſee him again; the maſk having fallen from his face in the ſtruggle, and the lantern he held in his hand expoſed to view not only a

ſet of features ſtrongly marked, but a large gaſh on his right cheek, cut in ſuch a ſingular form, that though ſeen but for a moment, Fitzhenry had indelibly fixed it on his recollection. Are there perſons in the world ſo hardy as to diſallow the interpoſition of Providence, through the medium of *preſentiment?* If ſuch there are, let them conſider the ſituation of my hero, and renounce their error. The ſubject of his late dangers had ſcarcely recurred to his thoughts, when the renewal of it became neceſſary to his immediate preſervation in another, and even more perilous attack.

Tired of the carriage in which he had completed half his journey, he made an exchange with the riding ſervant, and bidding him go into the chariot with his valet, mounted the horſe he had quitted: nor was it owing to any other cauſe than the train of reflections on which he meditated prior to this exchange, that he guarded

guarded himſelf with one piſtol under his arm, and one in each pocket. Three men paſſed by him as he aſcended a ſteep hill; he ſaw ſomething ſuſpicious in the caſt of their countenance, as well as in the ſpeed with which they flew by him: the eyes of one of them, he obſerved, were fixed upon him, and that he ſlackened his pace; letting his companions gallop on without him. Fitzhenry puſhed on, got to the ſummit, and faced about, the better to make his obſervations: he ſaw the fellow had turned back; he therefore ſtopped until he had come up with him. As he approached within the reach of his voice, Lord Fitzhenry bade him halt, and demanded his buſineſs.—The man aſked which was the way to ——. His Lordſhip condeſcended to direct him, and enquired what he wanted at that place. The other replied, he was a courier, ſent by Lord Hillford to his nephew Lord Fitzhenry. It is very well, ſaid he: deliver your diſpatches to

me,

me, for I am the perſon you ſeek. In drawing nearer to him, and taking off his hat, as he put a ſealed packet into his hands, Fitzhenry ſaw the features and the ſcar which had been ſo ſtrongly impreſſed on his memory. The paſſion of love, jealouſy, and reſentment, when once kindled in his heart, burnt with ſuch vehemence as to conſume the whole edifice of reaſon in the flame it raiſed. But his courage was firm and deliberate; he coolly put the papers into his pocket, bidding the meſſenger keep his ſtation till the carriage came up, when he ſhould get into it, examine what were the commands of Lord Hillford, and, as he meant to travel ſlowly, he ſhould ſend him back with an anſwer, if it required an immediate one. The wretch found ſomething in the command, or the tone it was delivered in, to alarm his fears of detection, and heſitated to obey it. Two of his brothers, he ſaid, who had buſineſs that way, were gone on, he would

would only overtake them, and return again before his Lordſhip could have occaſion to employ him. Fitzhenry drew the piſtol from under his arm:—I know you, he exclaimed;—move one ſtep, and I lay you dead at my feet! The villain, with a ſeeming air of ſubmiſſion, remained on the ſpot, but ſlyly drawing alſo a piſtol from his ſide-pocket—If you know me, cried he, be this to your heart, for it is no longer time to compliment. He miſſed his aim, the ball ſtruck off his Lordſhip's hat; whilſt that directed by his more ſteady hand, met it half way, and buried itſelf in the breaſt of the aſſaſſin; the reins dropped from his hold, he fell on his ſide, the horſe took fright, and dragged him on the ſtones, his foot having hitched in the ſtirrup; till, at the diſtance of a hundred yards, the ſpirited animal got rid of his burden, whom he left weltering in blood, and continued his ſhapeleſs race unimpeded.

To

To be brave is to be merciful—Fitzhenry was both in the extreme—he conſidered him no longer as his intentional murderer, but rather in the light of a miſerable object dying in his ſins, to whom one hour for repentance might be of more conſequence to his eternal welfare than ages to the life of a man whoſe deeds were leſs atrocious. To procure him this ineſtimable hour, he flew to his aſſiſtance, diſmounted, and would have tied up his wounds, but the victim of heaven's juſt vengeance told him it was too late: You deſerve to live, ſaid he, becauſe you can feel for the man who has twice aimed at your life: I deſerve to die, and I know I ſhall be———A groan filled up the pauſe. Fitzhenry was kneeling by him: Oh! tell me, he cried, who it is that employed you on this dreadful buſineſs? He gaſped for breath, three times pronounced the name of Lord Hillford, and expired, leaving Fitzhenry in a ſtate of incredu-

lous

lous aſtoniſhment much eaſier imagined than it is poſſible for me to deſcribe.

Before he could recover himſelf, or take his eyes from the corpſe over which he ſtood in a fixed attitude of contemplation, his thoughts confuſed, and his arms folded, he was joined by his attendants; to whom he repreſented the new danger to which his life had been expoſed; but cautiouſly concealed that the aſſaſſin had brought him diſpatches, nor ever once mentioned the name of Lord Hillford. He made them examine the pockets of the deceaſed, and himſelf received the papers which were extracted from them, in hopes, by inſpecting them, to remove the doubts which the laſt words, though of a villain, could not but have inſpired. His valet, who was an Italian, preſſed his Lord's ſpeedy departure out of that country: You will never be ſafe whilſt you ſtay in it, ſaid he; whoever it is that purſues your life will

will have it at laſt—there are a thouſand engines of fate to be hired for ſuch deeds as theſe; and if your Lordſhip will not be governed I muſt leave your ſervice, for I love you too well to ſee the blood of my Lord running out like the blood of that ruffian! As he ſpoke, the tears ſtreamed down his cheeks. Fitzhenry was pleaſed with this proof of honeſt ſenſibility, and not diſpleaſed with his counſel; he got into the carriage, and went that ſame day ſeveral ſtages on the road to Paris.—On examining the notes and memorandums entered in a ſmall pocket-book taken from the dead man, Fitzhenry was not only convinced of Lord Hillford's guilt, but of his determination never to recede from his ſanguinary purpoſe; it now appeared that, in making him the bearer of letters to his nephew, he propoſed to have him received without ſuſpicion, to follow his footſteps, and ſeize the moſt favourable moment for diſpatch, his two companions

nions being to lend their aſſiſtance if neceſſary: the deed at all events was to be done—but done as ſpeedily as poſſible.

Fitzhenry had no ſooner made himſelf maſter of theſe horrid inſtructions, than he entertained thoughts of returning to chaſtiſe the noble hypocrite with his own hand; but the conſideration of involving his beloved aunt in a new ſeries of affliction, turned him from the eager but momentary reſolution: and now it was that he lamented his miſplaced confidence on a man who, he too well remembered, had, for near twenty years, been the enemy of his houſe and the ſcourge of a lovely woman, the moſt exemplary of wives, and of all women the moſt amiable. It will not here ſignify to tell you with what bitterneſs he reproached himſelf for the deception he had fallen into: it was too late, the miſfortunes his folly produced were irretrievable, and he had nothing to do but

to make up his mind to ſupport the unpleaſant conſequences as well as he was able.

The ſcattered confuſed imaginations, by which he was aſſailed, on reading the contents of the pocket-book, fell infinitely ſhort of the agonies his tortured ſoul ſuſtained on examining the packet delivered into his hands by the aſſaſſin. —It was not the note incloſed in it from the villainous huſband of Lady Hillford, that ſtruck him with panic. As he conſidered him removed from puniſhment by the bar of family connection, ſo by his vices and his crimes he held him beneath contempt. It was the ſight of Lady Olivia's well-known writing on a cover, directed to himſelf, that firſt electrified him, and afterwards drove him to diſtraction. My readers, I preſume, will have no objection to ſee theſe letters laid before them in their own proper order, though not in the ſame order with which

which they were opened by Fitzhenry, who began where I ſhall think it more proper to finiſh, and, without infring ing the rules of regularity, firſt produce the epiſtle from Lord Hillford.

MY DEAR LORD,

In the joy I felt for your eſcape from the hands of ruffians, and in the confuſion of your ſudden indiſpoſition when I ſaw you laſt, I forgot to execute a commiſſion with which I was honoured by Lady Olivia the morning of her departure from Naples, and have no better atonement to offer for my negligence than by ſending the letter ſhe left in my hands after you by expreſs. If you retain the meſſenger I forwarded with it, you will find him well informed, and very capable of aſſiſting in the ſearch you purpoſe making after her. I have ſome reaſon to ſuppoſe a nunnery is the place where you will be moſt likely to find her; but perhaps ſhe has herſelf given you more certain

certain inſtructions in the letter I incloſe. She knew me for your friend by the warmth with which I pleaded your cauſe, or I ſhould not have been ſo happy as to be made the inſtrument of conveying to you the tender effuſions of your miſtreſs's heart: I go immediately to Rome; follow me as ſoon as you can, and command the beſt ſervices of that friend who wiſhes your happineſs may be eternal.

HILLFORD.

MISS MELMOTH TO LORD FITZHENRY.

(Incloſed in the preceding.)

You have done me the honour, my Lord, of ſometimes declaring a predilection in my favour; and it is a juſtice I owe myſelf, as well as your Lordſhip, that I ſhould tell you the veil is removed which has hitherto obſcured my ſenſes, and ſhewn me ſuch obſtacles to the ambitious

bitious views your partiality would have bid me aſpire to, that in future I beg to be conſidered as a ſtranger to Lord Fitzhenry, and that he will give himſelf no farther trouble to enquire where is the reſidence, or what the ſituation, of his Lordſhip's

Moſt obedient ſervant,

OLIVIA MELMOTH.

So determined a mandate, written in the very ſpirit of frozen indifference, chilled his hopes without abating the ardour of his paſſion. In a paroxyſm of rage, he accuſed Lord Wardour of having ſuperſeded him by the contrivance of her father, in the affections of his miſtreſs. It was an intrigue in which all the world were united againſt him; Lord Hillford was a murderer, and combined with this unknown father to deſtroy him; his aunt had forſaken him, Lady Wardour deceived him, and his own credulity betrayed him. He would forget

forget Miſs Melmoth, but he would fight Wardour; he would leave the ſerpents who had ſtung him, and would follow to the ends of the earth till he had come up with the enemy of his deareſt intereſt. —Such was the firſt ſtring of ideas and reſolves that hung themſelves on Fitzhenry's flaming, fluttering imagination. Wardour was already in England; he ſat down to inform his family they might expect his return to them in a few weeks; then purſued his way to Paris; from whence he would have immediately departed for Britain, if the violent perturbatations of his diſappointed mind had not brought on a fever that detained him there againſt his inclination. In the long confinement to which he was forced to ſubmit, his paſſions had leiſure to cool, and his reaſoning faculties to gather ſtrength. Lord Hillford was a villain; but it ſeemed poſſible, though he joined with the father of Miſs Melmoth, to take away his life, that Wardour

dour might not have tried to ſupplant him under the auſpices of paternal authority; his not having been once to viſit her whilſt ſhe was at Naples, his quitting the country without ſeeing or enquiring after her, were no ſymptoms of attachment. It was only from Lord Hillford, that this intelligence, of a concealed but deep-rooted paſſion, ready to ſacrifice itſelf to the gratification of its object, had ever originated; even when it came to him through the channel of his aunt, ſtill it was from her Lord; and how much credit ſhould be given to the words of an aſſaſſin did not admit of a ſecond conſideration, no, not in the agitated thoughts of Fitzhenry. When once he had begun on the vindication of his friend, he did not ſtop at poſſibilities, but ſuffered himſelf to examine whatever appeared under the colouring of probability: all that he knew of Wardour's honeſt, candid diſpoſition, from the earlieſt date of their acquaintance,

all

all the repeated aſſurances he had given him, that he would never be the huſband of Miſs Melmoth, all the hints that he had let fall of his affections being engaged in another place, all that Lady Wardour ſaid to him on his late excurſion to —— paſſed calmly in review before his now ſober, but late intoxicated ſenſes; and if they did not entirely do away his former ſuſpicions, they gave to the excruciating torment of a certain evil the much more tolerable ſhape of a doubtful one.

In the diſpoſition of mind I have been endeavouring to repreſent, Fitzhenry arrived at Calais, in his way to join his family, who were already removed to town, though earlier than it was their cuſtom to go there, that they might be ready to embrace him ſome days ſooner than they could have done had they waited till he joined them in the country. At Calais he met Sir William

Montreville; he had alſo the melancholy office of breaking to his old friend and ſchool-fellow the death of an only and tenderly beloved ſiſter, who, it was ſuppoſed, had died about that time, and that the body was then croſſing or had juſt croſſed from Calais to Dover. Whoever has read *The Packet* will want no further explanation of this ſcene, and to ſuch as have not read it I recommend to look for it where it only can be found.

A miſer can take very little delight in contemplating another man's riches; and a ſelfiſh mind can form no idea of gratification ariſing from participation, much leſs that in the ſorrows of another his own ſhould be forgotten. Such was really the caſe with Fitzhenry; for, as long as his attention was neceſſary to ſupport the exiſtence of a friend, as long as he watched by the pillow of Sir William Montreville, the part he took in his affliction, and by anticipation his

ſhare of the ſtill keener diſtreſs that awaited Lady Gertrude, ſwallowed up all ſelfiſh concern for his own affairs; nor was it till they were on their journey from Dover to the caſtle that he recalled to his memory their moſt unpleaſant and untoward ſituation. During the hours they travelled together, he made Sir William the confident of his eventful hiſtory, who borrowed from the dreadful contemplation of his mother's miſery a few moments of vague, confuſed attention to beſtow on the narrative of his injured friend, to execrate Lord Hillford, to pity Miſs Melmoth, and to exculpate Wardour from the imputation of treachery. Lady Olivia, or Miſs Melmoth, call her which you will, ſaid he, muſt be an arrant coquette to ſend you ſuch a letter as this, without your giving her juſt cauſe of complaint: on the contrary, from your deſcription, I ſhall ſtill believe her amiable, and that the letter you ſhew me is a forgery, a downright impoſi-

impoſition, cooked up between her father and Lord Hillford to ſeparate you for ever.

This was a new idea, and ſo warmly cheriſhed, ſo palatable to a lover's famiſhed hopes, that, after having ſlept one night at the caſtle, Fitzhenry made out the reſt of his journey with many ſanguine expectations and a decent ſort of compoſure, to which the counſel he received from Sir William, as well as his laſt hint, had very greatly contributed.

I ſhall ſay nothing of the affectionate reception he met with at home; there are, within the pale of ſome domeſtic circles, a ſort of joyful, rapturous expreſſion, when one of its members, who has been diſſevered from it, is reſtored to his right place; a pleaſure ſo warm, ſo wild, ſo diffuſe, as flies from all efforts of deſcription, but will ever find a

good repreſentation in the heart of ſenſibility. He found Courtenay, now Sir Edward Courtenay, in the family group, and the firſt moment he gave to obſervation convinced him the young Baronet was on a very amicable footing with Lady Jemima: it is more than probable that he wiſhed to have ſeen Lord Wardour on the ſelf ſame footing with Lady Elizabeth: he arrived before the ſecond courſe was removed; he ſat down at the table, but his eyes and his ears were better feaſted than his appetite; the happy countenances of his father and mother, the beautiful improvement he diſcovered in his ſiſters, the delight with which he heard himſelf addreſſed, as the moſt beloved of ſons, as the deareſt of brothers,—to anſwer their queſtions,—to return their endearments,—found him ſufficient employment, not only during the time of dinner, but for the remainder of the whole day and evening. However, the following morning, he contrived to get

get himſelf cloſeted with his father and mother, to whom he related his croſſes, his perplexities and perilous adventures, his meeting with Sir William Montreville, and the miſeries of that family, occaſioned by the untimely fate of its beautiful, its only female branch, which had withered and fallen from its ſtalk in a foreign land.—The repetition of a tale ſo melancholy could not be made without producing the natural effects of ſympathy: many were the ſighs, many the tears that were ſacrificed to the ſorrows of a mother and a brother, whoſe misfortune was irretrievable; but the bittereſt tears that were ever ſhed by Lord Uxington were when he reflected that the intentional murderer of his beloved ſon was the huſband of his equally beloved ſiſter; whilſt thoſe which fell from the eyes of his lady were more the offerings of gratitude to heaven, for the preſervation of her darling Fitzhenry, than derived either from horror or regret:

they regarded him as reſtored to them by nothing leſs than a miracle; they approved of his ſecrecy, in confining the name of his noble aſſaſſin to themſelves; they commended every part of his conduct, except where he had permitted himſelf to receive a villain into his confidence, a weakneſs reprobated by his father, but vindicated by his mother, on the ſcore of Lord Hillford's plauſibilities: they were of the ſame opinion with Sir William Montreville, that Miſs Melmoth's letter was a forgery: they promiſed all the aſſiſtance he could requeſt, in finding out who was the father of Lady Olivia, where ſhe was concealed; and accommodating matters between them, the whole peerage was rummaged over for earls who happened to be widowers, and were reputed to be without children.—Some, as is common on inquiſitionst hat have no other guide but ſurmiſe to direct them, and thoſe not leſs than five, ſeemed, from various circum-

circumſtances, not very unlikely to be the unnatural parent who had concealed himſelf from all the world except the Wardours and Lord Hillford; yet nothing certain was to be eſtabliſhed on all the intelligence that could be collected by the indefatigable reſearches of the Earl and Counteſs amongſt their numerous connections and unlimited acquaintance.

Fitzhenty, who every day experienced the diminution of hope and the increaſe of deſpair, fancied a change of ſcene would change the aſpect of his fate; he wanted to have a meeting with Lord Wardour; he could hear nothing of him in town; fortune might be more his friend in the country; and as all his propenſities were indulged, he found it no hard taſk to prevail on his family to make an excurſion to Mount Clear, though the ſeaſon and the weather were very much againſt the pleaſure of ſuch an undertak-

ing. His father and mother were acquainted with his true motive for this arrangement; but his ſiſters, who only ſaw, without being able to account for the ſpiritleſs anxiety that oppreſſed him, thought he muſt be gone diſtracted, to prefer the cold region of Wales, in the gloomy month of November, to the brilliant circles which were beginning to form themſelves in the vicinity of St. James's; it was not that they felt any regret to accompany him; they only wondered at the oddity of his choice: Lady Elizabeth had ſome reaſon or other for being herſelf particularly attached to the Welſh mountains; and as Sir Edward Courtenay had requeſted that he might be included in the travelling party, it may be ſuppoſed Lady Jemima would not very much repine at any other good thing ſhe was forced to leave behind her.

This ramble, in what may be called the very midnight of winter, did not anſwer exactly

exactly to any one end for which it was intended. Fitzhenry purſued his ſearch after Lord Wardour to the gates of Northangle, where all the information he could get ſerved only as fuel to feed his heated imagination, and to point againſt his own peace the whole ſhower of poiſoned arrows that are to be met with in the quiver of jealouſy. He underſtood that his Lordſhip had been ſome months at Northangle, but was returned again to the Continent. This killing intelligence more than confirmed all his former ſuſpicions; it added to them a freſh aſſortment of wrongs; and at the partial tribunal, to which he ſummoned all the appearances that could be ſummoned, the inflammatory jurors of his brain, pronouncing Lord Wardour guilty of ſubterfuge, announced the ſame ſentence againſt Miſs Melmoth; and on his return to Mountclear, in the preſence of thoſe parents who did not give much credit to the renunciation, he formerly declared

his intentions to trouble himſelf no longer about his old love, but to look out for a new one, who ſhould have more ſtability; though it was pretty certain he muſt be content with leſs beauty. Lord Uxington laughed at the bravado; his mother ſmiled, and only replied, that ſhe was exceedingly glad to hear him ſpeak on the ſubject with ſo much rationality.—— I ſee you do not believe me to be ſerious, ſaid he, but I was never in my life more determined; if you will go back from whence we came, and have no objection to Lady Betty Weſtbrook for your daughter, I think I ſhall take ſome of the many hints her mother has beſtowed on me, and by propoſing myſelf, convince you that I am not quite the ſhuttlecock you are determined to ſuppoſe me.—They both aſſured him neither of them would be adverſe to his choice, whenever he preſented the object of it for their approbation. Something more might have been ſaid on the ſame laughable ſubject: for

by

by them who knew the heart of their ſon better than he knew it himſelf, this ſolemn ſcheme of ſeparation from its firſt attachment was conſidered rather as ludicrous than pathetic; but whatever would have followed was interrupted by the appearance of Lady Jemima, who ran into the room panting for breath, and crying out, that two Ladies were overturned at the bottom of the park—They have twenty attendants, ſaid ſhe, but Elizabeth is taking care of the moſt beautiful creature my eyes ever beheld: Pray, papa, pray, Fitzhenry, fly to their aſſiſtance; I don't know if they are hurt, I did not ſtay to enquire, but ran to fetch you; and off ſhe ſet again, at a pace that would have outſtripped the winds themſelves. Fitzhenry was not very far behind her in ſpeed, whilſt the Earl and Counteſs followed as faſt as they could. Jemima and her brother Mercury had no time for confabulation, as they flew on the errand of humanity; he traced her

fleet

fleet ſteps to the verge of the park, which was bounded by a turnpike road, and at the diſtance of an hundred yards he perceived ſeveral ſervants lifting up a carriage that had fallen on its ſide, Sir Edward Courtenay in converſation with a lady who ſtood by it giving directions, and his ſiſter Elizabeth ſitting on a bank by another female, whoſe head reſted on her boſom. Judging from appearances, that no great harm had been done, he reached the gate through which any man, who was not upon life and death, for his own convenience would have choſe to paſs, though it led him by a conſiderable angle out of the right line; but had he known from whom he was divided only by a hedge, he would have pierced through it, notwithſtanding its being conſidered a ſufficient buck fence. He laid his hand upon the gate—it was otherwiſe untouched by his weight, for at one ſpring he cleared it, and found himſelf within a dozen yards of the lady

neareſt

nearest to Sir Edward; the other was at a greater distance: he looked at her with astonishment as she turned to receive him, and exclaimed in Italian, Good God, is it you, Madam? can it be the Princess Maritinda in this country, and in this situation? Permit me to be useful to you, and I shall no longer quarrel with my destiny.

She looked at him with an air of kindness; seemed instantly to check the involuntary sentiment, and damped the ardour of his advances, by dignifying the reply she made to his offers of service with that sort of reserved politeness which has nothing to do with warmth, pleasure, or sincerity; she acknowledged herself obliged with an air that shewed she was pained by the obligation; she said she was glad to see him—but the expression of gladness was very far removed from her countenance. Fitzhenry felt abashed at a reception, which though not deficient

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in politeneſs, was totally the reverſe of what he had reaſon to expect on the ſcore of a moſt flattering preference ſhe had declared for him in her own country. Unable to aſſign any cauſe for the ſudden eſtrangement, and however mortified at perceiving it, he made no diſplay of his chagrin, but ſpoke of the Earl and Counteſs being on the way to bring their compliments in perſon, and to entreat the honour of her Highneſs's company at their chateau, until the accident that had happened ſhould be repaired. Her words and looks ſtill continued in the freezing quarter; ſhe expreſſed much concern for the trouble ſhe had already occaſioned; hoped he would not increaſe her debt of obligation to his family by enlarging her knowledge of them; ſaid ſhe could not poſſibly wait for the honour of being preſented to his father and mother; ſpoke of the accident as a ſlight one, the wheel which had fallen off by the loſs of a linch-pin, being already replaced;

her buſineſs was urgent, and ſhe was under the neceſſity of purſuing her journey immediately. Sir Edward Courtenay had not interrupted the firſt ſhort act of compliments, on one part, warm, animated, ſincere—on the other, cold, peeviſh, and conſtrained—till hearing her ſpeak decidedly on the ſubject of her haſty departure, and thinking he perceived through all her frigidity, that ſhe wiſhed to keep him at her ſide merely to engage his undivided attention, that no part of it might be beſtowed on her travelling companion, he ſaid in a careleſs tone, Surely, Fitzhenry, you will not permit her Highneſs to carry off an old acquaintance of yours, before you have made her your *baiſemains*; Miſs Melmoth will hardly thank you for ſuch a proof of negligence.

Let it here be remembered how very few minutes ago it was that Fitzhenry had formally renounced the pow-

ers

ers of Miſs Melmoth; and then, if it can be done, let it be accounted for, why the bare mention of her name ſhould deprive him of every faculty, except ſuch as were ſufficient to make him recall to his memory the lady he had ſeen reſting on the bank—to tranſport him thither—to convince him by occular demonſtration that Miſs Melmoth herſelf was ſitting betwen his two ſiſters—and in ſpite of his wiſe reſolutions to ſeek a new miſtreſs, he had juſt ſenſe enough left to throw himſelf at the feet of an old one—Adorable Olivia! have I at laſt found you? was the whole treaſure of his vocal expreſſion; or, if he might have drawn any further reſources from articulation, the Princeſs had followed his ſteps ſo cloſe, and the three young ladies got up with ſo much precipitancy, that his words uncoined were returned back to the mint of ſilence. My dear, ſaid her Higneſs, in a tone of authority, you muſt ſhorten your acknowledgments to theſe ladies

and

and Lord Fitzhenry; every thing is ready, I am in haſte, you are not to expect that I can allow you another moment. I ſhall not intrude on your patience, madam, replied Miſs Melmoth; I have already ſaid all that I can ſay to teſtify my gratitude, and declare how much I am penetrated by the goodneſs of Lord Fitzhenry's amiable ſiſters. His Lordſhip, added ſhe, with an air of confuſion that improved her beauty more than it took from the impreſſive ſoftneſs of her countenance, from theſe ladies muſt receive my thanks for any demands he may have on my acknowledgments.

Lady Elizabeth and Jemima knew not what to make of a ſcene to them ſo incomprehenſible? they ſaw the moſt lovely face in the world ſhifting its colours with more than the ſwiftneſs of thought; they perceived in her tones fear, anger, and reproach; they ſaw their brother ſtruggling with ſo many different emotions as ſeemed to threaten him with inſtant

ſtant annihilation, yet could form no idea from whence all this diſtraction proceeded. Fitzhenry did not once remove his eyes from Miſs Melmoth, as long as ſhe continued to ſpeak; but ſeeing ſhe had done, and that ſhe was about to follow her conductreſs to the carriage, which would ſhut her out from his ſight perhaps for ever, the pride and diſpleaſure that had hitherto held him in the bonds of ſullen reſerve, yielded to deſpair; his arms, which had been folded as if in defiance of her diſdain, while ſhe avoided his ardent glances, fraught as they were with all manner of upbraidings, involuntarily extended as ſhe turned away from him—he ruſhed forward, ſeized the hands of the Princeſs, and exclaimed with violence—We do not ſeparate thus, madam! Miſs Melmoth's cruelty has no precedent; but in you I hope to meet with greater mercy, greater humanity, greater juſtice.

Speak,

Speak, my dear, ſaid the Princeſs, evidently vexed at the application made to herſelf; and let me be informed why it is that you have given Lord Fitzhenry cauſe to accuſe you of cruelty and injuſtice.

I wiſh you madam, replied Miſs Melmoth, rather to make that enquiry of his Lordſhip than of me, who, from my ignorance of the charge, am totally incapable of making any ſort of defence,

One moment—only one moment, cried Fitzhenry, permit me to ſpeak in private to Miſs Melmoth.

There is no ſuch perſon as Miſs Melmoth in this company, replied the Princeſs; of which truth, if I am not miſinformed, your Lordſhip is already apprized; and my daughter, Lady Olivia Eglington, can admit of no conference in which I ſhall not requeſt to have the honour of being made a party.

Oh,

Oh, God!—is all this poſſible? cried Fitzhenry, how then have I been deceived!

We are loſing a great deal of time in *eclairciſſements*, ſaid the Princeſs, which it is impoſſible ſhould ever be of the ſmalleſt conſequence to Lord Fitzhenry —She looked on Lady Olivia as if ſhe would have ſaid, Are you ready? Sir Edward Courtenay and the two Ladies, ſeeing the Earl and Counteſs at a good diſtance coming down the park, had ſilently withdrawn to prepare them for a ſcene ſo unexpected, as what they ſuppoſed muſt preſent itſelf to them on their nearer approach; but no ſooner were they told the ſituation of affairs, and found their preſence could be of no ſervice, than they returned back to the houſe, taking the young people with them, and waited with the utmoſt impatience for a finiſhing of this ſtrange *rencontre*, from the report of Fitzhenry.—

But

But as it is the duty of hiſtorians to procure for their readers intelligence from the very fountain-head, I return to the moment in which the princeſs's eyes aſked this queſtion of Lady Olivia—Are you ready?——to which hers made no poſitive reply, at leaſt in the affirmative.

Is it the princeſs Maritinda? cried Fitzhenry—can it be the mother of my divine Olivia—who ſports with complicated wretchedneſs, which has no reſource but in her bounty? I have never offended, I have never ceaſed to adore your adorable daughter. He threw himſelf at the feet of Lady Olivia, and preſſed her hands as ſhe averted her face from him:—Tell me, ſaid he, I aſk it in the preſence of your mother, have you renounced utterly, and for ever renounced me? The ſentence of my death, if it muſt come, I will receive from no lips but your own.

Speak,

Speak, my dear—I command you to ſpeak, ſaid her mother; I love you too well to lay even the appearance of reſtraint on your conduct; if you have any particular conſideration for Lord Fitzhenry, or if otherwiſe, you are to declare it; for I will not allow you to keep him another moment in ſuſpenſe, or me from purſuing my journey.

Lady Olivia, with mingled ſweetneſs and dignity, referred his Lordſhip to a letter which ſhe had left for him with Lady Hillford before ſhe quitted Naples.

I received no letter, cried Fitzhenry, from my aunt, neither have I ſeen Lady Hillford ſince the fatal moment that I was treacherouſly prevailed on to tear myſelf from you; but if the note delivered to me by Lord Hillford is what I am referred to for your ſentiments—It was the very ſame, interrupted the princeſs; and your Lordſhip muſt excuſe

cuſe me if I put my daughter in mind that ſhe has no time for diſcourſing on this or any other ſubject—I have her father's commands for her conduct as well as my own; and though I ſhould be inclined to diſobedience, I dare not infringe them.

Fitzhenry heard the ſentence of his fate pronounced, with more diſorder and impatience than his pride would let him make known. I am ſatisfied, ſaid he, and have now only to requeſt the hohour of leading your Highneſs to the carriage.

You are beginning to be reaſonable, ſhe replied, preſenting her hand to him; Lady Olivia followed, but did not once open her lips. Having placed the princeſs, he turned with ſtudied coldneſs to offer his aſſiſtance to her daughter; but ſeeing her lovely eyes brim full of tears, the perſonated character of indifference,

which

which it had coſt him ſome pains to aſſume, was thrown aſide, and he exclaimed, Your looks do not pronounce me a wretch without hope!—Ah, ſpeak, deareſt Olivia, and ſay what it is that has made you the enemy of Fitzhenry! Her mother now called from the carriage, and bid her enter it—the authoritative ſummons was obeyed with ſeeming unreluctance, but not till ſhe had replied in ſpirited accents to her lover's tender addreſs—I am not *your* enemy, my Lord, but I am the friend of my ſex.—If you followed your Engliſh connections to Rome, there is no doubt that you underſtand me: otherwiſe the meaning of my words may not be worthy of your Lordſhip's inveſtigation. However, be aſſured this accidental conference is the laſt we ſhall have on the ſubject of a former acquaintance.——Should we meet hereafter, it muſt be as ſtrangers. That I am not ambitious ever to be conſidered in any other light by Lord Fitzhenry, is a decla-

declaration decided and unequivocal.—The laſt word hung on her lips, as with the lightneſs of a ſylph ſhe aſcended the ſtep; and before the agitated lover had time to recall his ſcattered ſenſes, which were all diſperſed in the novelty of her expreſſions, ſhe had diſappeared, and the carriage was out of ſight.

Rooted to the ſpot on which he had laſt beheld her, ſtood Lord Fitzhenry, his arms folded, his eyes caſt down in a ſolemn attitude of attention, expecting as it were that the murmuring winds ſhould bear back to him the tones of that voice, which, whilſt it ſtabbed him to the ſoul, hung upon his ear in ſweet and raviſhing harmony. He reconſidered the ſtrangeneſs of her words, and was puzzled to find out their import; at firſt he ſuppoſed that his Engliſh connections, which by her manner ſeemed a term of reproach, could have no other reference but to the Hillfords; then

again doubting his own penetration, rather than that ſhe on any occaſion ſhould expreſs herſelf, when ſpeaking of them, with ſo little ceremony or reſpect—he totally diſcarded the idea, without knowing what other to ſubſtitute in its room.

Before he could extricate himſelf from the difficulties into which his confuſion had plunged him, a coach belonging to the princeſs's ſuite, and filled with her attendants, came near the ſpot on which he was ſtill ſtanding; and in their haſte to get forward, might have driven over him, ending his miſery, his life, and adventures by one ſimple manœuvre, had not the poſtillions reined in their fiery ſteeds, and called out in menacing accents to bid him ſtand out of the way —He had not heard the ſound of wheels till he was thus rouſed, nor till they were within three inches of his heels; he then looked up, and at the firſt view ſeeing to whom the carriage belonged, he commanded

manded them to ſtop—No, ſaid they, we have orders to proceed, and will ſtop for no man. Lady Olivia's woman looked back, for they had paſſed him: ſhe ſaw and knew Lord Fitzhenry, puſhed herſelf quite through the ſide-glaſs, entreated them to let her ſpeak to the gentleman, if it was but for one moment; they ſlackened their pace, ſeemed inclined to indulge her, and Fitzhenry was getting up to them, when another voice from the other ſide called out, bidding the drivers not to wait an inſtant, but to go on as faſt as they could, or ſhe ſhould incur the anger of her lady, who could have no accommodations till ſhe got up with her. She ſpoke very bad and broken Engliſh, which made his Lordſhip eaſily underſtand that he owed this new diſappointment to one of the princeſs's women. The features of Lady Olivia's woman were familiar to him, and he bleſſed her for the friendſhip ſhe ſeemed ſo much

inclined to have ſhewn him. As he followed them with his eyes, he ſaw, when they had got at the diſtance of about twenty yards, a hand put out on the ſide occupied by his friend, and not doubting that it belonged to her, and that ſhe meant to make him ſome ſignal, he attentively watched its motion; he then ſaw her once more extending her head beyond the glaſs, and obſerving that he followed them, ſhe preſented ſomething white to his view, dropped it on the road, drew herſelf back, and before he could reach the place ſhe had ſo ſtrongly marked, a ſhort turning enveloped the travellers, and he ſaw no more of them.

What can this mean? cried Fitzhenry, as he ſtooped to take up a folded paper from the ground, which was evidently the ſame that had been thrown from the coach, and as clearly intended for his inſpection. It was a large ſingle ſheet,

made

made up in the form of a letter, but unſealed, and without any ſort of ſuſperſcription. He entertained no doubts whether or not he ſhould open this paper;—perhaps it might have been more to his ſatisfaction had he let it alone.—Curioſity has a ſtrong impulſe, and hope a ſtronger. Why did ſhe drop it purpoſely for him to take up, unleſs it had ſome reference to Lady Olivia? or why did he take it up, unleſs with a deſign of examining into the contents, which he did not defer doing, half ſo long as I have deferred laying them before my readers, which I am now about to do, and deſire they will conſider it not only as a very uncommon inſtance of a chambermaid's conſideration for a diſcarded lover, but likewiſe as a fine piece of ready invention to give him the information he wanted, through another channel, which her travelling companions would not allow her the opportunity of doing in the manner that would

have been moſt agreeable both to his Lordſhip and herſelf.

The paper picked up by LORD FITZHENRY.

MY DEAR SISTER.

I intend to write you a very long letter, becauſe you complain that my laſt was too ſhort. Indeed I have enough to ſay if I knew how to ſet about it, that is, if I could tell at what end to begin. You are very happy to be with Lady Wardour, in that charming country, which is to be ſure the fineſt in all the world, and ſhe is ſo good to her ſervants, that if you behave well, it will be a making to you; believe, dear ſiſter, that I enjoy your happineſs: I ſhould ill deſerve my own good fortune, if I did not. I have lived with my lady ſince ſhe was ſix years old, and in all that time I cannot ſay ſhe has once been out of humour, though many are the times and often her temper

temper has been tried by you know who—there is no occaſion to mention names—for ſhould my letter by any accident fall into a certain lady's hands, living in the ſame houſe with your lady, my ſpeaking ſo freely could do me no good, and might do you a great deal of harm.—I think I never ſaw my own country look ſo diſconſolate as it has done ever ſince we came back to it in ſuch a hurry; but perhaps it is becauſe I am low-ſpirited that every thing appears ſo changed; beſides, you know we have not now got one ſingle neighbour; and though the ladies have been expecting Lord Wardour every day, he is not come, and I fancy we are to meet him in London: it is only my own gueſs, for there is nothing of the matter ſpoke of in the family, but we are ordered to get every thing ready to go there in two days, and a fine houſe, the ſteward tells me, is taken for us in Groſvenor-ſquare: and now, dear ſiſter, you will know why I begin my letter here,

for I ſhall not have half the time when we go to London. I told you I was out of ſpirits, and now I will tell you the reaſon why I cannot enjoy myſelf as I uſed to do. You muſt know, then, that ever ſince my Lady was owned by the Prince and Princeſs for their daughter, ſhe has ſcarcely held up her head; I find her weeping ten times in a day, not that ſhe ever ſheds a tear when the princeſs is with her, but tries to be cheerful. Indeed this great lady is very pleaſant, and very fond of Lady Olivia, and ſhe is very affectionate and dutiful to her mother; yet ſomehow or other I do not think ſhe loves her quite ſo much as ſhe loves Lady Hillford: I heard the Princeſs tell her ſo one day, though to be ſure it was only in jeſt; and my dear young Lady was ſo confuſed, I thought ſhe would have died, becauſe ſhe was only ſuſpected of loving any body, even Lady Hillford, better than ſhe did her own mother. I never ſaw any thing like the

part-

parting between them, when ſhe was taken away ſo ſuddenly from Naples: I do not like to think of it, for it makes me more melancholy than I was before; I hope, after all, they will not make her marry Lord Wardour before they know whether ſhe had not rather marry Lord Fitzhenry; the laſt is my favourite, and ſo I once did think he was of my Lady—not that ſhe ever told me ſo: and yet at other times I think, if ſhe did not like Lord Wardour, ſhe would talk of him with leſs kindneſs, and not wiſh ſo much as ſhe does that he was come back to Northangle. She wears the picture of ſomebody about her neck—I have never ſeen any but the gold ſide of it, and that peep I got by chance; ſo I cannot tell you which of them it is, as they are both, I muſt own, very deſireable.—I don't know which pleaſes her beſt, but I know, though I wiſh well to Lord Wardour, I wiſh a great deal better to Lord Fitzhenry, who, I am ſure,

whatever ſhe may think of it, loves her more in an hour than Lord Wardour will in a week. I wiſh thoſe Engliſh ladies I mentioned to you in my laſt, had never come to Naples—they did no good there—I don't know what notions they put into my Lady's head; but ſhe is not the ſame as ſhe was before they came; and Lady Hillford grew as melancholy as Lady Olivia, after ſhe had ſeen ——

Here ended the fragment, and here pauſed Fitzhenry.—I ſaid, he had better for his own repoſe, never have looked into it: and I ſaid true; for before he was made acquainted with the chamber-maid's opinions, his was one of thoſe few ſituations in which a ſtate of ſuſpence is to be preferred to a ſtate of certainty; and what any other man would have conſidered as a doubtful point, whether his rival or himſelf was the leaſt fortunate, he adduced to proofs from circumſtances—proofs ſtrong as holy writ—and eſtabliſhed

eſtabliſhed them in his own diſfavour. The tears of Lady Olivia fell for Wardour —not one drop of ſympathy for the woes of Fitzhenry—Her impatience was only to meet Wardour—the preſence of Fitzhenry, the hated Fitzhenry, diſguſted her—She wore the image of Wardour on her heart—the idea of Fitzhenry, was driven thence. Theſe points ſettled to the entire ſatisfaction of his diſturbed judgment, but alſo to the final deſtruction of his laſt expiring hope—one poor little ſpark that had kindled at her lovely eyes, when he ſaw them floating in lucid tenderneſs—he returned to his family, often ſtopping on the way to conſider over again what he had conſidered a hundred times before: yet in all the mixed multitude of complicated reflections, not a ſingle thought was beſtowed on that part of the abigail's lamentations over the unlucky appearance of certain Engliſh ladies at Naples, from which ſhe ſuppoſed ſome cauſe of diſcontent had

had ariſen to diſturb the repoſe of Lady Olivia; and it never might have reverted back to his memory, if, as he was reading the paper in full aſſembly, Jemima had not cried out, I'll be hanged if theſe Engliſh ladies are not Lady Owen and Clarinda! In a moment they were all of the ſame opinion, except Fitzhenry himſelf, who ſaid, it was impoſſible they could have been there and acquainted in Lady Hillford's family, without his having ſeen or heard of them.

Oh, ſaid Elizabeth, we know they were going to the Carnival at Rome, and that they went by ſea to Naples, Lady Owen giving it as a reaſon to all her acquaintance for chuſing that mode of conveyance rather than a journey by land, becauſe Miſs Owen's complexion could be ſcreened on board a ſhip, as ſhe would have no occaſion to ſtep out of the cabin, but muſt be entirely ſpoiled if expoſed through all the journey to a foreign

foreign ſun, which was ten times hotter than an Engliſh one, as ſhe very well knew, who was herſelf a foreigner.

Vexed to the ſoul as he was, Fitzhenry could not help joining in the laugh Lady Elizabeth intended to promote by the ridiculous quotation of Lady Owen's own words, in hopes to draw him out of his deſperate melancholy; and he aſked, ſuppoſing the thing to have happened, what could two ſuch fools have done to ſhake the peace of Lady Olivia, or to injure him in her opinion?

Perhaps, ſaid the Counteſs to her ſon, it may not be very difficult to anſwer your queſton, if you will firſt allow that there is ſuch a paſſion as jealouſy.

Would to God, cried Fitzhenry, I could diſallow it!—alas! my dear mother, I am at this inſtant the moſt tortured of its victims.

There,

There, again, replied Lady Uxington, you may be miſtaken; I own, from the contents of this paper, I am inclined to think Lady Olivia is as great a martyr to it as yourſelf.

But not for me, cried Fitzhenry, with vivacity—Wardour——

His father interrupted him—draw not your concluſions ſo haſtily, ſaid he, but liſten to your mother before you decide on any thing: I believe ſhe is right in her conjecture, and that you are wrong in yours.

I am ſure, brother, you have no good cauſe, added Jemima, to fear Lord Wardour, when you acknowledge that juſt before ſhe drove away you ſaw the tears come into her eyes; it was nothing but her ſeparation from you, I am convinced, that could have brought them there. —Sir Edward Courtenay conſidered the fair

fair ſpeaker with a look of tender gratitude not to be defined; whatever truth there might be in her unſtudied obſervation, it no doubt conveyed a great deal of ſenſibility, which ſhe ſeemed to find out, and the bluſhes which modeſty threw over the diſcovery ſhe had made only ſerved to reveal it the more.

Lady Elizabeth had acquired much additional penſiveneſs from the time her brother mentioned the name of Lord Wardour, fearing, no doubt, as it is very natural to ſuppoſe, what might be the probable conſequence of a meeting between them: if there was any other cauſe for her viſible uneaſineſs, it is not my buſineſs to ſearch it out as long as ſhe chooſes to hide it. Lord Uxington had drawn the Counteſs apart, and was ſpeaking to her in a low voice—Fitzhenry had thrown himſelf into a chair, as if he did not belong to any of them, or was very much intereſted in the cabals

of

of his domeſtic circle, till he was drawn out of his reverie by feeling the preſſure of Lady Uxington's hand on his own. My dear ſon, ſaid this affectionate mother, it is impoſſible that your father and I ſhould witneſs your diſtreſs, whether founded on real or imaginary diſappointments, without wiſhing to relieve it: we have been conſulting on the moſt likely means to effect your cure, and are not only prepared to leave this place as ſoon as you pleaſe, but, when we get to town, it ſhall be my ſtudy to cultivate the acquaintance of Lady Olivia's mother: your ſiſters will ſoon make an intereſt in the heart of Lady Olivia; ſhe has already ſeen them, and when ſhe knows them, ſhe will not be able to refuſe them her confidence.—Lord Fitzhenry kiſſed the hand of his kind mother, and ſhe felt, as he held it to his lips, that his own trembled with yet unconquered agony. I neither mean, continued her Ladyſhip, to ſoothe your paſſions by impoſing

poſing on your reaſon, or to flatter your hopes at the expence of my own veracity: hear me then declare to you, that it is my firm opinion, all the eſtrangement in Lady Olivia's conduct, and all the coldneſs of which you complain, has its origin in the folly of Lady Owen, and the vanity of her daughter—one having affirmed what the other never contradicted, namely, that engagements of the moſt ſerious nature exiſted between you. Your friend, the Ducheſs of Radſtock, ſpoke to me on the ſubject; ſaid, ſhe had the inſolent confeſſion of an intended marriage from the ſilly mother of Clarinda, was herſelf quite ſcandalized at the degrading report, and ſeemed mightily miffed with me becauſe I took no part in her reſentment, which, knowing your ſentiments would have been altogether ſuperfluous.—The Counteſs ſaid a great deal more to convince her ſon that theſe diſtracted Owens muſt ſomewhere or other have met with Lady

Olivia,

Olivia, and created all the miſchief that had been produced: perhaps he could not believe it likely, neither did he think it ſo very impoſſible that they might have been at Naples in his abſence; might have ſeen Lady Olivia, and might have prejudiced her againſt him by their idle, ignorant miſrepreſentations. Yet if that was the caſe, why did ſhe wiſh to ſee Wardour, why expect him with ſo much impatience, why wear the picture of Wardour on her boſom? It cannot be my picture, ſaid he,—I have never ſat for it but once, and then only at the requeſt of Lady Hillford.—With his head full of crotchets, and his heart full of thorns, he ſet out the next morning for London, leaving his family to follow with leſs lover-like expedition, and got the ſtart of them by twenty hours.

Inſtead of ordering himſelf to be ſet down in Piccadilly, he got out of his carriage

carriage in Groſvenor-ſtreet, and, inſenſible to the fatigues of rapid travelling, which had been uninterrupted by refreſhment of any kind during the laſt tedious night of his journey, he proceeded to the Square, not to call on his miſtreſs, but merely to feaſt his ſight with the ſpot where ſhe reſided, to find out the houſe which her mother had taken, and, if poſſible, ſpeak to the femme de chambre, who was ſo well diſpoſed to his intereſt. In this laſt project his Lordſhip did not ſucceed, for though, after many inquiries, he was directed to the door of the Princeſs Maritinda—alas! it was cloſed, the windows were ſhut, and he ſaw no ſervant of whom he could aſk queſtions or gain intelligence: thrice did he promenade round the Square, as often ſtop at the houſe which contained his treaſure:—once he pulled his hat over his face, reſolved that he would give the humble knock of a dependant, and demand

to

to ſpeak with Lady Olivia's woman; but having the knocker in his hand, a thouſand fears aſſailed him, that his perſon, if now unknown, might, in future, be recollected: he therefore changed his mind, turned from the door, and, by the light of the lamps, found his way into Piccadilly, where, devoured by impatience, he condeſcended to wait till his family came up to him, without making any further progreſs.

As ſoon as Lady Uxington arrived in town, Fitzhenry beſought her, that ſhe would not neglect to put her deſign, of forming an acquaintance with the Princeſs, into immediate execution, and propoſed, that his ſiſters ſhould accompany her the next morning on a call of inquiry; the accident which had happened to the ladies in their neighbourhood giving them a good colouring for their officious civility.

The

The experiment was accordingly made: neither the Princeſs nor Lady Olivia was at home. They muſt, however, return your viſit, cried Fitzhenry,—and with that hope he conſoled himſelf. Several days elapſed yet no notice was taken of it: he then declared it was all the fault of ſervants, who had certainly forgot to give both the cards and the meſſage. Sir Edward Courtenay ſaw with what violence he conſtrained himſelf to bear theſe repeated diſappointments, and took it into his head, without ſignifying his intentions, to endeavour at gaining admittance, but had no better luck than the ladies; the Princeſs was denied to him as ſhe had before been to them: he afterwards told Lady Uxington his ill ſucceſs, who conſidered the purſuit as hopeleſs, except fortune ſhould be more favourable to them by accident than ſhe ſeemed inclined to be by deſign. Willing to take her in all manner of directions,

tions, the Countefs went oftener with her daughters into public, than had been her cuſtom ſince their preſentation; but the Princeſs and Lady Olivia lived ſo much out of the world, that, though for two months ſhe ſought them every where, ſhe found them no where: they had kept themſelves ſo perfectly inviſible, that they neither engaged the attention of curious nor the converſation of idle ſpectators. In all the circles of faſhion Lady Uxington did not meet with one family by whom they were viſited, and ſhe ſeriouſly adviſed Fitzhenry to give up Lady Olivia; putting him in mind at the ſame time, of his former reſolution to carry his attentions to Lady Betty Weſtbrook, where he might ſucceed without difficulty, as ſhe underſtood the Ducheſs had made it known, though not to herſelf, that her daughter's late indiſpoſition proceeded from a too partial conſideration for his merit.

Fitzhenry

Fitzhenry ſhrugged his ſhoulders—You do not believe me, ſaid ſhe.—My dear mother, he replied, I know enough of that ridiculous woman, to believe every thing that can be ſaid of her; or, if I was inclined to doubt the veracity of your information, I certainly could advance no excuſe for my incredulity, after receiving the ſelf-ſame intelligence from her own lips.—What is it you mean? cried the Counteſs. Nothing, he returned, but that her Grace told me laſt night, if I would make Lady Betty a viſit in her dreſſing-room, I ſhould do her more good than the phyſicians—with ſome other innuendoes, not calculated to make me deſpair, if I had choſe to try my fortune in that quarter.—Shocking! ſaid Lady Uxington—and what anſwer did you return to this indelicate mother?—I laughed at her, he replied, and told her I could not believe the flattering inſinuation, unleſs Lady Betty herſelf was to confirm it.—But you know ſhe is gone

out

out of town for the benefit of air, retorted her Grace. I will take you to her to-morrow, if you pleaſe, and promiſe ſhe ſhall confirm all that I have told you.—I would not have repeated this bagatelle, ſaid Fitzhenry, but to convince you that I never ſhall condeſcend to take a mother ſo unlike yourſelf, or a wife who wiſhes to ſeduce my affections by medicine and compaſſion, rather than engage them by ſupporting the dignity and delicacy of female reſerve. I never in my life had one ſerious thought of Lady Betty Weſtbrook; and, when on a former occaſion I mentioned her to you and my father, perhaps, if you knew what was at that moment the real ſituation of my mind, you would not hold me accountable for the folly or madneſs I may have uttered.—But, my dear Fitzhenry, ſaid his mother, though I conſent to drop the ſubject of Lady Betty, will you refuſe me the conſolation of hearing

that

that your mind is more compoſed *now*, then it was *then*?

That queſtion, he replied, it is not in my power to anſwer; I forget what I then felt, I only know what I now feel. —He haſtily kiſſed her hands and ran out of the room. Why he left her ſo viſibly agitated, muſt here be accounted for.

Three days prior to the converſation I have been relating, and after two months trial to procure an interview with Lady Olivia's woman, Fitzhenry, at laſt ſo far ſucceeded in his look-out for the dear opportunity, that he ſaw her come out from the Princeſs's houſe, followed her into the ſtreet whither ſhe was going; but had only time to thank her for the ſervice ſhe had done him, to offer her his purſe, and to have it refuſed, when one of the Princeſs's domeſtics paſſing by them put an end to the

conference which might otherwiſe have taken place. I can ſtay no longer, my Lord, cried ſhe, in a ſtate of the utmoſt confuſion: if my Ladies ſhould hear that I am ſeen talking to a ſtranger, I muſt be undone.—Where ſhall I ſee you again? aſked Fitzhenry.—She named a haberdaſher's ſhop in Piccadilly—When, and at what hour? he cried, as ſhe ran from him: ſhe turned her head and only replied, To-morrow at four, when my Ladies are at dinner, I will try to get out for five minutes.—He ſaid nothing of this appointment to any body, but kept it punctually, and was diſappointed. Next day he returned again with the ſame ill ſucceſs, and left the place of aſſignation, half frantic with vexation: but his ſenſes were put into pretty tolerable repair when he got home, for there a note which had come by the penny poſt waited for him; it only contained theſe words, *To-morrow morning at* 11 *o'clock*.—There was a charm in them

them that reſtored him to perfect good humour; he met his family with cheerfulneſs at dinner, attended them to a ball in the evening, where he met with her Grace of Radſtock, and had juſt finiſhed giving his mother a ſketch of their extraordinary *tête à tête*, when looking on his watch he found himſelf within five minutes of eleven: the *rendezvous* in his head, and a thouſand tumultuous emotions in his heart, it may eaſily be accounted for, why it was that he made his exit with ſo much precipitance.

Nothing like diſappointment encountered him on this third expedition to the haberdaſher's: he found the young woman got there before him:—ſhe was ſtanding at the ſhop-door watching his approach with impatience, diſtinguiſhed him at the diſtance of fifty yards, and ran towards him, crying out, For heaven's ſake, my Lord, do not ſpeak here,

but follow me!—ſaying which, ſhe let him in by a ſide door to a ſmall dark parlour; here, ſaid ſhe, we ſhall not be interrupted; your Lordſhip's commands muſt be ſhort, for I am limitted to ten minutes. Fitzhenry, by way of bringing much buſineſs into a ſmall compaſs, poured out a thouſand queſtions, and would have burthened her memory with as many more, had ſhe not deſired to be heard in her turn; rightly conſidering that her reſponſes ought to divide the time with his Lordſhip's inquiries:—what they were, might be found out by the anſwers ſhe made to them, which were in ſubſtance as follow.—Lady Olivia, ſhe did believe, would not conſent to receive a letter: and if ſhe was to offer the delivery of one, ſhe ſhould loſe her place: ſhe knew it was on his Lordſhip's account that her lady would not ſtir out of the houſe, as well as in obedience to the will of her mother. The Engliſh ladies who came to Naples in his abſence were a

Lady Owen and her daughter; ſhe had ſeen them by accident—they were great favourites of Lord Hillford. Lady Hillford grew melancholy, and Miſs Melmoth, as ſhe was then called, after they went away was more diſcompoſed than ſhe had ever been in her whole life, till the Prince and Princeſs came to claim her as their daughter, and the latter hurried her away to Mrs. Melmoth's houſe in Wales. She did not know whoſe picture it was that Lady Olivia wore round her neck—ſhe believed once it might have been his Lordſhip's but now ſhe thought otherwiſe.—What!—you think then, cried Fitzhenry, it is the picture of Lord Wardour?—She did not obſerve his countenance, otherwiſe ſhe would have been terrified by the expreſſion it bore when he aſked the queſtion—but made a pauſe till he had done ſpeaking. You do not anſwer me, ſaid he—then you certainly do know that it is the picture of Lord Wardour!—Indeed my Lord, ſhe replied,

I do not know it for a certainty, and yet I do not think it very improbable neither; for when my Lady came to undreſs laſt night, I perceived by her eyes ſhe had been weeping—with joy no doubt, for ſhe was very glad to ſee Lord Wardour, and the Princeſs had left them alone together. Fire flaſhed from the eyes of Fitzhenry when he aſked how long Lord Wardour had been in town —then ſoftening his voice, that his purpoſe might not be comprehended, he added, The Princeſs, I ſuppoſe, will not make him a part of her family till he becomes the huſband of Lady Olivia!—Oh, no, ſhe innocently replied, his Lordſhip did not arrive till very late laſt night; he went to ſleep at his own houſe; he had not been in Groſvenor-ſquare this morning when I came away; but it is moſt likely he will dine there, and that my Lady may take up more time, than is her cuſtom at the toilet, which was the reaſon why I took the liberty to make

make my appointment at ſo early an hour, that cannot but be inconvenient to your Lordſhip.—Not in the leaſt, ſaid he, with great calmneſs—I am very much your debtor; you have now ſatisfied all my doubts, and I will detain you no longer:—he forced a valuable diamond on her finger, and flew to the houſe of Lord Wardour, but ſtopped on the way to call at his own appartment—for what purpoſe will be ſeen hereafter.

Fitzhenry was ſo exceedingly agitated when he aſked at the door if Lord Wardour was at home, that the porter, whom he had never ſeen before, looked at him, as he anſwered No—as if he ſuſpected he was deranged in his intellects, nor was his opinion much ſhaken when he left with him the following meſſage: Find out your Lord, ſaid he, wherever he is, and tell him I wait for him on the right-hand ſide of Hyde-Park. And what name am I to deliver in to my Lord? aſk-

ed the porter, in a churliſh tone.—True, I had forgot that—ſay it is Lord Fitzhenry, who is ſo impatient to congratulate him on his arrival in England. Will your Lordſhip pleaſe to walk in? ſaid the man, with a low bow, and quite another voice from what he had ſpoken in before: his Lordſhip may be come home, or he may not be gone abroad; permit me to enquire.

By no means, cried Fitzhenry. If he is at home, when he hears my name he will gueſs my buſineſs, and follow me to the place I have appointed. He turned on his heel. The porter, wondering to ſee a Lord look ſo much like a madman, having ſhut the door after him, went up with the meſſage to Lord Wardour, who had given orders to be denied, for no other reaſon than that he did not chooſe to be interrupted whilſt meditating on a viſit in which his heart was tenderly concerned; and to make out the time, he ſat with

with his watch placed on the table before him, to mark when the hand ſhould point at one, the very earlieſt hour he could ſuppoſe his devoirs would be admiſſible. The meſſage from Lord Fitzhenry was delivered without comments: it gave him a great deal of ſatisfaction, and he went out to meet him, impreſſed with the idea that he ſhould now have it in his power to ſerve the friends he moſt loved, whoſe misfortune it was to be the dupes of others, rather than the machinators of their own miſery. He had already ſoothed the ſorrows of Lady Olivia he had in part removed them, and the cure of Lord Fitzhenry's ſuſpicions he did not conſider as being a more difficult undertaking.

Such was the temperature of his philanthropic diſpoſition when he met and offered his hand to Fitzhenry, who looked ſulky and rejected it ſcornfully.

Is this the reception of a friend? aſked Lord Wardour coldly.—No, not of a friend, but of a pretended one, replied Lord Fitzhenry warmly. Theſe are too haſty concluſions, ſaid Wardour—here are piſtols (drawing a pair from his pocket), take your choice my Lord, I will fight you firſt, and reaſon with you afterwards. For what am I to fight? aſked Lord Wardour, aſtoniſhed at the madneſs of his propoſal—For Lady Olivia, cried the maniac, throwing off his coat, and cocking the piſtols. She will not thank me, replied the man of reaſon, if you force me to lay you dead at my feet. —Your life and impoſitions end together, exclaimed the furious Fitzhenry. If your honour is not worth defending, ſupprot thy daſtard ſoul, if thou canſt, againſt the charge of cowardice! ſaying which, he ſtruck him a blow on the face, and bid him chooſe his piſtol.

But

But for the aggravating crime of ſuicide added to murder, Wardour would rather have ſpilt his own blood than the blood of Fitzhenry; yet with all the fervent feelings of man about him, it was impoſſible his paſſions ſhould any more ſlumber after a blow had rouſed them; he caught up one of the piſtols, but ſtill offered to lay it down if he would ſuffer himſelf to be convinced how much he had injured that honour which never was forfeited, and wronged that courage which was able to maintain itſelf in all ſituations—To which he received no other anſwer from the raſh hot-headed youth than bidding him take his diſtance, and give a better proof of it than words, which coſt him nothing. Whether it proceeded from his fears of wounding Fitzhenry, or that the ſuddenneſs of the action unfitted him for ſo ſerious a conteſt, Wardour, who firſt fired, miſſed, and received the ball of his adverſary the next moment in his own body, he fell to the ground.

ground. Fitzhenry drew near to ſee if he had done for him; but the moment he beheld the pale face and bleeding wounds of a man once ſo dear to him, with whom he had ſo many years lived in love and friendſhip, the intoxication of his ſenſes took another turn: frantic with grief he threw himſelf by the ſide of his victim, bound up the wounds with his handkerchief preſſed his cold hands, and wept plentifully over them. Two of his ſervants, when he went home to fetch his piſtols, had been commanded to attend in the park with a carriage, and wait there until they were called for. On hearing the diſcharge of the piſtols, they, for the firſt time, gueſſed what had occaſioned their being ordered to that place, and ran to the aſſiſtance of their Lord, whom they found in the ſituation above related. It happened at a time of the day when there were no obſervers. Fitzhenry was giving orders to ſend away for a ſurgeon before they lifted the wounded

wounded man into the carriage; but he preſſing the hand which had levelled him to the duſt, ſaid in a faint voice, Take care of your own ſafety; if I die you have foes who will give you trouble. Never will I go from you, cried Fitzhenry, never will I forgive the wretch who has murdered you. Go—go, replied the other, I will receive no aid till I ſee you this moment depart from me; live for the ſake of Lady Olivia, live to know me for your friend, and oh! deareſt Fitzhenry! live to tell Lady Elizabeth, that in death as in life ſhe has been the only object of my invariable affections. Generoſity ſo unparralleled, a declaration ſo candid, inſtead of ſoothing the pangs of remorſe that had ſeized on the ſoul of Fitzhenry, pointed them with excruciating ſharpneſs, added agony to horror, and gave to the gloom of deſpair more than the fury of madneſs.

Lord

Lord Wardour, fainting under the pain he ſuffered from his wound, attempted in vain to aſſuage the more intolerable anguiſh of his miſerable friend, who at laſt was forced from him by the poſitive renewal of his former aſſertion, not to admit of any aſſiſtance until he had withdrawn to a place of ſecurity. There was no time to be loſt; he might have been doubly his deſtruction, had he longer reſiſted an argument ſo concluſive. One word, ſaid he, before I go—If you die, the wretch your murderer ſhall never be the huſband of Lady Olivia, or the diſgraceful inhabitant of his own country; ſaying which, he left Lord Wardour to the care of his ſervants, who, lifting him into the carriage, conveyed him home, whilſt poor Fitzhenry, deſerving much blame as a dueliſt, but entitled to much commiſeration as a penitent, flew to the houſe of his father, took a ſudden leave of his family, mounted his horſe, and, as it was ſuppoſed by them,

them, purſued his road to Dover; though having changed his mind before his foot was in the ſtirrup, he went out at Hyde-Park Corner, and his Journey ended at the reſidence of Sir William Montreville. What his reception was at the caſtle is fully explained in *The Packet*, and tautology is what I wiſh with all my heart to avoid, neither will it anſwer any good end to attempt deſcribing what is not to be deſcribed—the diſtreſs in which the raſhneſs of our hero flung the whole Uxington family, who immediately went out of town, after appointing regular meſſengers to bring them hourly tidings of Lord Wardour, whoſe wound for a long time was ſuppoſed to be mortal, from the difficulty his ſurgeons found in extracting the ball. The preſence of Sir William Montreville, who, let it be remembered, ſet out from the caſtle to aſſure them of Fitzhenry's ſafety, communicated the only gleam of light that had been thrown in upon their benighted proſpects

ſpects ſince the fatal moment of ſeparation from an adored ſon, and tenderly beloved brother.

Before Sir William left London, he was enabled to carry back with him better hopes of Lord Wardour's recovery than before the ball was extracted could be entertained; he alſo, under the title of his Lordſhip's friend, making no uſe of Fitzhenry's name for his introduction, found the Princeſs Meritinda's doors open to him when he went there under the pretence of enquiring after the health of the wounded peer. He had the honour of a full hour's conference with her Highneſs, and not only learnt from her the exact condition of his Lordſhip, but was informed that he had lately buried his mother, which ſhe called a piece of good fortune; her life, ſhe ſaid, muſt otherwiſe have fallen a ſacrifice to the ſhock of that treacherous maſſacre acted on her ſon by a madman.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding the aſperity with which ſhe ſpoke of Fitzhenry, it was not in the politics of Sir William to enter on his defence, or even to acknowledge that he knew him; while Lady Olivia, who was preſent, and whoſe beauty appeared to him a ſufficient apology for almoſt any ſort of raſhneſs, did not maintain the ſame ſilence. With eyes that ſparkled in tears, and features that glowed with animation, Ah, madam, ſaid ſhe, do not altogether condemn Lord Fitzhenry, when he is not preſent to plead his own cauſe; or at leaſt ſpare him from the charge of treachery till he is accuſed by Lord Wardour, who, notwithſtanding their unfortunate *rencontre*, calls him a man of honour and his friend. The Princeſs bade her be ſilent, or quit the room. She choſe the latter, leaving Sir William Montreville more enraptured with the goodneſs of her head and heart than he had before been with the charms of her perſon: but above all de-

lighted

lighted that he ſhould carry back to his friend a trait ſo favourable to him in the mind of his enchanting miſtreſs, who Fitzhenry had pre-ſuppoſed would never again hear his name mentioned without feeling all the emotions that horror and diſguſt were capable of inſpiring. It was this intelligence, followed up by the preſence of his family ſoon after at the caſtle, together with the certainty of Lord Wardour's recovery, that all united to exhilarate his ſpirits, and made him able to aſſiſt with much of his uſual vivacity at the nuptials of his two ci-devant ſchool companions.

Had Lord and Lady Uxington wanted any inducement to lengthen their viſit *at* the caſtle, beſides what was to be met with in the happy and amiable poſſeſſors *of* the caſtle, they would have found it in the free intercourſe with that ſon, whom a few ſhort weeks before, they had conſidered not only as baniſhed from their ſociety,

ſociety, but an alien to his country; whilſt Fitzhenry, ſtill ſmarting for the conſequences of his impetuous temper, ſolemnly renounced his errors, or fancied that he had renounced them.

When Lord Wardour was declared out of danger, and not before, Lord and Lady Uxington conſented that Fitzhenry ſhould reveal to his ſiſter Elizabeth the meſſage with which he was charged by her eſtimable lover in the moment of agony. She had long been but too ſenſible of his deſervings for her own repoſe; the canker of grief had preyed on her damaſk cheek; ſhe had pined in ſecret, and been the ſilent victim of deſpair. The tide of joy that ruſhed upon her heart at a diſcovery ſo unexpected was more than her timid ſpirits or delicate frame could ſupport; and ſhe actually fainted in the arms of her brother, who cried out, Great God! what might I not have done!—Had I killed Wardour,

dour, I ſhould have deſtroyed you alſo! Was I to go further into the ſcene, it would take from my readers a great deal of pleaſure in making it out themſelves.

Immediately on their return to town, Fitzhenry called at the door of Lord Wardour, ſent up his name, and was inſtantly admitted—Trembling with ſhame and covered with confuſion, he approached the eaſy chair where reclined that altered form which from health, vigour, and activity, by his own raſh hand, had been reduced to paleneſs, languor, and almoſt infant imbecility; he was ſupported by pillows, and could in no ways turn himſelf round, but cried out before he had ſeen his face, Is it you my friend?—is it you my dear Fitzhenry? The words, the tone of affection in which they were uttered, added more to the dilemma of Fitzhenry than reproach would have done: the one he deſerved, and could have ſupported; the other he had

had not merited. It therefore extinguiſhed all that was man in his fiery compoſition, except the divine ſparks of admiration, gratitude, and contrition, which threw him ſpeechleſs at the feet of that man on whoſe cheek his daring hand had once impreſſed the inſignia of diſgrace. This is too much! exclaimed Lord Wardour, burſting into tears. It is not too much, cried Fitzhenry—Honour is my deity, in your perſon I inſulted her, it is to offended Honour that I kneel for pardon; for the leſſer injuries I have offered to friendſhip, I gratefully accept the remiſſion you are willing to grant me. The arms of his friend were expanded to receive him, and gracefully riſing from the poſture of ſubmiſſion, he ruſhed into them with a ſpontaneous motion, that ſpoke the fervour of his renewed attachment more than volumes could have explained it.

Short as was the ſcene of reconciliation, it had been too lively not to affect Lord

Lord Wardour with more agitation than was likely to forward his recovery. Fitzhenry, alarmed for the conſequences of this irritating interview, avoided every ſubject that he thought might be intereſting, and on many ſucceeding ones obſerved the ſame precaution; for whenever Lord Wardour would have ſpoke to him either of Lady Olivia or Elizabeth, he would ſay to him, with a ſmiling countenance, The return of your health is at preſent of more conſideration to my tranquillity than all the ladies in the world—I will not hear or ſpeak about them till you are ſufficiently fortified to bear the burthen of as much joyful intelligence as I ſhall have to communicate. Enough was contained in theſe ſhort expreſſions to give him hopes that he ſhould not find either Lady Elizabeth or her parents averſe to his propoſals; yet how far ſhort were the expectations he had raiſed to the reality which awaited him, when informed

informed by Fitzhenry, ſome days afterwards, of the riſe and progreſs of Elizabeth's affection for him! To her brother ſhe had now no concealments, and in his ſituation was it poſſible he ſhould have any to Lord Wardour, ſuch at leaſt as were ſo exactly calculated to re-eſtabliſh his health, and ſecure his felicity? No—he opened to the view of her tranſported lover ſo ſweet a certainty of reciprocal tenderneſs, as for an inſtant overwhelmed him with emotions too ſtrong for utterance. At length getting the better of this ecſtatic pauſe, he laid his hand on Fitzhenry's—You have given me life, ſaid he, and ſhall I not dedicate to you the firſt moments of my new exiſtence? You once condemned me for duplicity: it is not ſufficient that you no longer accuſe me of harbouring deſigns adverſe to your intereſt with Lady Olivia Eglington, I muſt alſo explain away ſuch myſterious traits in my conduct.

Hold,

Hold, cried Fitzhenry, interrupting him; avoid the ſubject, I beſeech you, which muſt revive the horrors of my guilt in ſtronger colouring than my fortitude will be able to ſupport.

Generous and ſelf-rigid as you are, replied Wardour ſmiling, you would certainly not bid me be ſilent had you a lover's pre-ſentiment, by which you could underſtand the pleaſant communications I have to make you: the explanation has already been too long delayed, you have renovated my ſtrength, I am equal to the taſk, and will no longer delay it.

Promiſe then, cried Fitzhenry, that you will not touch on the morn of my inſanity.

Be it ever buried in oblivion! returned Wardour.—Remember, he continued, after the death of my father, I informed

formed you, that I had gained the confidence of Olivia, and ſtolen from thence the ſecret of her attachment to yourſelf. I told you alſo of my having two points to ſettle with my mother, neither of which would give her pleaſure, and that I deferred coming to an *eclairciſſement* till her health ſhould be re-eſtabliſhed. —Yes, I perfectly recollect all theſe circumſtances, ſaid Fitzhenry; they were mentioned in the laſt letter I ever received from you.—Ah! replied Lord Wardour, I too well know the deception which has with-held from your hand many others written ſince the period you allude to: had they found their way to you, it would have ſaved us both much anxiety, and I ſhould have very little now to relate, independent of mere repetition: as it is, I muſt run over the ground as lightly as I can.—When I attended my mother and her friends to the continent, I had never entertained an idea that Olivia was any other than

the niece of Mrs. Melmoth. The evening before we left Northangle, ſhe aſked me if I had informed you of our intended excurſion. I anſwered in the affirmative; ſhe ſeemed pleaſed, and made me promiſe that ſhe ſhould ſee your anſwer to my letter whenever it might overtake us. The frequent opportunities that were induſtriouſly thrown in our way, of converſing together, were exceedingly dear to us; for it was then that we could ſpeak of you and Lady Elizabeth Fitzhenry without interruption: all which time was ſuppoſed by my mother and Olivia's aunt to be employed in finding out perfections in each other.—You are already informed of our meeting by accident with Lord and Lady Hillford, and of their taking Olivia with them to Naples—a ſeparation painful to both:—ſhe had no friend who could talk to her of Lord Fitzhenry; nor I a ſympathizing confidante, who would liſten to me as I ſpoke of his lovely ſiſter. Your obſti-

nate

nate ſilence was another ſource of regret, which gave me infinite pain. I frequently importuned you with letters, but without effect. You came to the continent; you ſaw Lady Olivia; you pleaded your own cauſe, and ſhe gave you no reaſon to deſpair: but of all theſe circumſtances I was uninformed, until I arrived in England five weeks ago, and learned them from Lady Olivia's own confeſſion. However ſhe might once have favoured me, exclaimed the impatient, penitent Fitzhenry, I can never again be the object of her partiality; I have forfeited my claims, and my hopes are all blaſted. —— Pronounce not your own ſentence ſo haſtily, replied Lord Wardour: give me your attention yet a few moments longer—I ſhall paſs over whatever is not very material, to come to that which is of more importance to the buſineſs of your heart —The declining health of my mother, continued his Lordſhip, detained me with her a conſi-

derable time after Olivia had left our ſociety. The two ſecrets I wiſhed to diſcloſe were ſtill my own. How could I add to the load of that dear mother's recent afflictions, by telling her, I had renounced the errors in which I was educated—or ſaying to her, The daughter of your choice ſhall never be the wife of Wardour;—I grew ſo impatient at not hearing from you, that I determined to ſeek you in England. About the ſame time my own affairs called me into Wales. I had made a conſiderable purchaſe, which could not be completed unleſs I went thither. My mother propoſed to go with me; but I thought her in a ſtate of convaleſcence, promiſed to ſhorten my abſence, begged ſhe would not leave a ſituation from which ſhe was beginning to receive benefit, and at length ſhe conſented to wait my return at ————. On my arrival in London, I immediately went to your father's houſe, in Piccadilly; your family were all

all out of town, and I was there informed you had been fifteen months on the continent. I enquired where Lord and Lady Uxington and the Ladies Fitzhenry were then reſident, with a half-formed idea of going after them; but it fell to the ground when I underſtood they were gone on a tour of viſits to a diſtant part of the kingdom.—I haſtened my departure for Northangle, that, having finiſhed my buſineſs there, I might return to the country I had quitted, and demand of you by what unfortunate means I had forfeited your friendſhip. The buſineſs that carried me to Wales detained me ſome weeks beyond the time I had limited for its final arrangement; and, at laſt, I left it incomplete, on receiving from Mrs. Melmoth moſt alarming accounts of my mother's increaſing indiſpoſition. I found her on my arrival at ——, even worſe than my fears had bid me expect.

Fitzhenry looking on the face of his friend, ſaw him change countenance, and would have ſtopped him from proceeding on a ſubject ill calculated to his preſent condition; but he refuſed to ſubmit. I feel ſenſibly enough, ſaid he, that I am juſt now unequal to the repreſentation of certain ſcenes, my part in which can only be eſtimated by the virtues of my mother, and the veneration in which I held them: a veil ſhall be drawn over her ſufferings and my own; what I ſhall paſs on to, will more immediately demand your attention.—He then repeated from Lady Wardour's information, what I had good naturedly let my readers into before—that Mrs. Melmoth, diſcovering Lord Wardour's friendſhip for Fitzhenry to be much ſtronger than his paſſion for her niece, had written to Lord Uxington,—that all letters had by the ſame contriver been ſtopped between the two friends, and that the continental excurſion was undertaken with the view

of

of detaching them from each other.—At this period of the hiſtory, Fitzhenry's cheeks glowed, and his eyes flaſhed fire. I ſee what are your emotions, ſaid Lord Wardour; but calm them, I entreat you, nor glance a reflection on the memory of my mother; I haſten to exonerate her from the weight of your reſentment: it is true, ſhe was united in the plans of Mrs. Melmoth: yet hear me diſcloſe her reaſons for this apparent combination, and then ſay, if the deed is not exculpated by the motive.———Fitzhenry would have done away the ſentiment his eyes had expreſſed: but Lord Wardour delicately took the blame on himſelf, for having brought forward appearances inſtead of facts in his former ſtatement. I ſhould rather have told you, ſaid he, that my mother was your real friend, than your ſeeming enemy; you had made an intereſt in her friendſhip from the time you firſt ſhewed yourſelf at Northangle; at which period I muſt

try to make you underſtand her ſituation, though I was myſelf ignorant of it, till ſhe revealed it to me in her laſt moments.—The illuſtrious birth and high fortunes of Lady Olivia were revealed only to my father, and that under a ſeal of ſecrecy ſo ſolemn, that my mother herſelf was uninformed who were the author's of Olivia's being, until ſhe was recognifed as daughter to the Prince and Princeſs Maritinda. My father, ſhe ſaid, often lamented the oath by which he was bound never to divulge her name or connections; his confeſſor would not abſolve him, and he could not abſolve himſelf. Nor was this the only engagement he had entered into with the father of Olivia. On my marriage with her depended a much larger portion of his eſtate, than he could forfeit without involving my ruin in his own; the alliance was offered to him on theſe terms only; and it being ſo much for the aggrandiſement of his family, he could not reſiſt them:

them: every communication was made to my mother, when the infant Olivia became our neighbour, except the name of her father, which always continued a ſecret between my father and Mrs. Melmoth.—Ah! cried Fitzhenry, I already underſtand the diſtreſſing ſituation of your amiable excellent mother: ſhe could not be my friend, but at the expence of your deſtruction.—Exactly ſo, replied Lord Wardour, but I have not yet told you the principle of mercy to which your intereſt was ſacrificed after the death of my father. Mrs. Melmoth, who had acquainted the father of Olivia with the diſcovery ſhe had made of your attachment, ſpoke to my mother on the ſubject, and with many tears real or affected, produced the anſwer ſhe had juſt received. My mother was permitted to examine this letter, the name being firſt torn from it, and the contents ſtiffened her with horror: it was a curſe by which the writer had bound himſelf to take

away your life, and the life of his daughter, if there could not be found a leſs cruel method of diſſolving the mutual attachment you had entered into; with an order immediately to convey Olivia to Italy, that he might place her in the hands of thoſe who ſhould be anſwerable for her conduct.—Yes, cried Fitzhenry: and Lord Hillford was this truſty perſonage, who twice hired villains to aſſaſſinate me, in compliance with his friendſhip for the Prince.

We will conſider more of that hereafter, replied Lord Wardour; at preſent tell me, if you do not acquit my mother, on the ſcore of your ſafety, and the preſervation of Olivia, for giving her conſent to the ſteps that were taken, not only to divide you from the miſtreſs of your heart, but from the friend who has never for a moment forgotten, or ceaſed to love you.—I do, I do, ſaid Fitzhenry eagerly, and am more indebted to her goodneſs

goodneſs than I am able to expreſs; but proceed; I fatigue you with interruptions.——Yes, replied Lord Wardour, I come now to the part that concerns you more than any thing I have related. In conſequence of an expreſs from Lord Hillford, to ſignify his intentions of going to Rome, and his deſire of reſtoring Olivia to the protection of her friends, my mother, though much indiſpoſed, ſet out with Mrs. Melmoth to fetch her young charge from Naples; the latter fell ſick on the road; Lady Wardour finiſhed her journey alone; no father or mother had then declared themſelves, and your aunt Hillford reſigned her very reluctantly to the care of her, from whoſe hands ſhe had received the precious depoſit. They were come up to Mrs. Melmoth, found her recovered, and were about to purſue their route to ——, when the Prince and Princeſs Maritinda, in a ſuperb equipage, and magnificently attended, arrived at the hotel; and, after being

being a conſiderable time alone with Mrs. Melmoth, ſhe returned to tell my mother and Olivia, that theſe were her parents, and that ſhe muſt prepare to follow them.——I paſs over a ſcene, in which you are not particularly intereſted, to tell you, that the party ſeparated thirty miles ſhort of ——; the Prince returned to Naples; the Princeſs conveyed her newly-acknowledged daughter nobody knew whither; my mother ſuppoſed to a nunnery; but I have ſince been informed by Olivia, ſhe was carried back to Wales, to the very houſe where ſhe had paſſed the former part of her life; that ſhe was always told, ſhe ſhould certainly be my wife; and though ſhe knew that to be impoſſible, ſhe anxiouſly expected my return, and was almoſt as much mortified as her mother, on finding I had left Northangle only three days before ſhe came back to its neighbourhood.—Fitzhenry, added he, with a ſmile, I like the turn of your coun-

countenance, and am going to reward you for the patience with which you have heard me boaſt of your miſtreſs's anxiety on my account.—Fear me not, cried Fitzhenry; though jealouſy had once as many heads as a hydra, you have cut them all off.—Ah! returned he, if I could do as much for all lovers as I have done for you and Olivia, ſuſpicion ſhould never again diſturb the repoſe of honour, candour and innocence.—What do you mean? ſaid Fitzhenry. Is it poſſible that I can have been ſo happy to owe the reſentment of Olivia to the paſſion I wiſh her to feel with the ſame ardency as I do? Oh! if ſhe has been jealous, ſhe muſt love! and if ſhe loves —— Huſh! cried Lord Wardour; defer theſe exclamations—I expect my ſurgeon every moment, and in that moment have yet much to diſcloſe—On the death of my mother, Mrs. Melmoth deſired ſhe might return to this country under my eſcort. She had ſhewn ſuch kind attentions

tions to that dear parent, lamented her ſo much, and loved her ſo ſincerely, that though in every other point of view I always conſidered her as the moſt diſagreeable of women—when I ſaw her in the light of the nurſe, the friend, and the ſolitary mourner of my mother, I was intangled in my gratitude, conſented to her propoſal, and, on our arrival in town the night which preceded our meeting, I conducted her to the Princeſs's, where we were both received with no common degree of pleaſure. On this memorable evening I was alone with your Olivia long enough to read the whole hiſtory of her innocent, diſappointed heart.—Oh! repeat it to me, for Heaven's ſake! cried Fitzhenry.—Certainly, ſaid Lord Wardour; it is a fair and beautiful volume, on every page of which your name is written, though that villain Hillford has covered it with blots wherever it was to be found; and till I expunged them, the whole appearance was gloom. She thought

thought herſelf deſerted; that your affections had been only the idle ſport of an hour; that in reality they were pledged to another: ſhe talked of a Lady Owen and her beautiful daughter, who had been introduced to her by Lord Hilliford; one of whom filled her head with ideas that the other did not contradict. I was warm; called her credulous, and defended you. She bluſhed to find herſelf accuſed of credulity, and drew from her pocket a letter, which ſhe expected would ſeal my conviction. I took it from her hand; my eyes ran haſtily over the contents; and I ſaw at one view the whole manœuvre. Truſt me with this diabolical ſcrawl, ſaid I, till I have ſeen Fitzhenry. She would not hear me, and I was forced to reſtore it. I then convinced her, that it was neither written by you, nor with your knowledge. The evidence I produced would not have wanted weight, had it been leſs authenticated: as it was, the condemnation

demnation paſſed from you, and lighted on herſelf; whilſt the many tears ſhe ſhed were confeſſedly the children of pleaſure and repentance.——Fitzhenry, inſtead of weeping to hear that his miſtreſs had wept, expreſſed the moſt frantic tranſports at ſo undoubted a proof of her tenderneſs, and would that moment have flown to throw himſelf at her feet, if Lord Wardour had not reſtrained him. This violence, ſaid he, will undo all, leave the affair to me; and when I am enough recovered to ſee Olivia, I will undertake to manage it. Eternal ſeparation muſt be the inevitable conſequence, ſhould this detection of Hillford's forgery be underſtood, or even ſuſpected, either by the Princeſs or Mrs. Melmoth, before we have provided againſt their machinations.——Eternal ſeparation! repeated Fitzhenry, and reſigned himſelf to the conduct of Lord Wardour; he then reverted to the forged letter, and aſked for as many of the contents

contents to be laid before him as his friend could recollect.—That will be the whole, ſaid Lord Wardour; it was ſhort, and every word is fixed in my memory: Hillford put it into Olivia's hands on the day ſhe left Naples, and though addreſſed to himſelf, he either by accident or deſign never re-demanded it. He makes you addreſs him thus:—"My dear Lord, a ſerious attachment, of long ſtanding, formed with the approbation of my whole family, the object of which is now on her way to Rome, prevents my return to Naples on this ſide the Carnival, unleſs I can prevail on Miſs Owen to ſend me to you in the character of a Benedict; but if ſhe chooſes to exhibit me as her ſlave, till we get back to our own country, I muſt wait upon her leiſure. Pray preſent me to the ladies."—Here Lord Wardour's ſurgeon made his appearance, and the conference ended.

To whatever part of the town either buſineſs or inclination called Fitzhenry, he always found in the map of his heart, that the way to it was through Groſvenor-ſquare, and by that quarter of it, where, on one little ſpot, all his world of happineſs was centred. After his recent converſation with Lord Wardour, it cannot be ſuppoſed, that returning home he ſhould forget his old path, and try to find out a new one. Such an idea never entered his head; nor did he ſee Lord Uxington ſtanding before the Princeſs's windows, till the hand of his Lordſhip was gently preſſed upon his ſhoulder. I do not aſk what brought you hither, ſaid his father; but why you find me ſtuck up at your miſtreſs's door, requires ſome ſort of explanation.—I flatter myſelf, replied Fitzhenry, with a gay air, that your curioſity, my Lord, is concerned in our meeting; are you not trying to catch a glance at your future daughter?—You are quite in the wrong,

returned

returned the Earl; chance conducted my ſteps, and an old woman arreſted them; I have been waiting here in hopes of a ſecond look; but as I ſee no chance of gratification, let us be gone, and I will tell you more of the viſion; — ſaying which, he drew his arm through Lord Fitzhenry's, and they went away together.—As they walked ſoberly along, his father informed him, that, as he came out from Mr. Needham's, a hackney-chair, with the curtains cloſe drawn, was ſet down at the Princeſs's door. Whilſt one of the chairmen was gone up to knock, a hand beckoned the other to the ſide-glaſs, which being ſuddenly dropped, he was near enough to diſtinguiſh a voice, that he thought he had heard before, order the head to be lifted up; and, as the door opened, he watched the perſon who came out of the chair, and with haſty ſteps got into the houſe. This perſon, he affirmed, was Mrs. Pemberton, or the ghoſt of Mrs. Pemberton; nor

nor could Fitzhenry laugh him out of the idea, though he begged him to recollect how difficult it would be for either the one or the other to puſh through the gates of a convent, where he had heard both Lord and Lady Hillford ſay, ſhe had locked herſelf up for life. The Earl, though not to be perſuaded out of his opinion, ſaid no more about it, but liſtened with aſtoniſhment to the recital made him by Fitzhenry, of all that had ſo lately paſſed between him and Lord Wardour. On entering the Counteſs's apartment, ſhe preſented a letter to her Lord: This, ſaid ſhe, has arrived in your abſence; the girls and myſelf have been eagerly wiſhing for your return to hear news of your amiable ſiſter. Lord Uxington felt for his ſpectacles, and not finding them with readineſs equal to his impatience, he gave the letter to his ſon, who read it aloud. The contents were theſe:

LETTER.

LETTER.

UNDER the dominion of horrors inconceivable, I call upon you, friend of my heart, deareſt affectionate brother, to calm my agitation, but I call in vain; you hear not my voice, you know not my diſtreſs. A world of waters divides us: your arms cannot ſtretch over them to receive me; I cannot ruſh into them for conſolation. Ah! if I had the ſweet Olivia to ſoften my ſorrows! She, alas! is torn from my ſight. Nothing remains for my eyes to contemplate, but the mangled body of my huſband—how terrible! bleeding at every pore—his ſins unrepented—his guilt unexpiated—it is too, too dreadful! They drag me from the ſcene of horror, but it is ſtill preſent to my imagination; it will be ever impreſſed on my memory.—The ſurgeons have juſt left him: there are hopes, they aſſure me, that though my Lord's wounds are dangerous, they may not be mortal.

I ſeize

I ſeize the fleeting moment of hope, the ſhort reſpite from deſpair, to unveil the complicated miſery of my ſituation.—— By the abſolute commands of my Lord, I left Naples with two Engliſh ladies, who would not have been the companions I ſhould have choſen; but he forced them upon me.—Where is Fitzhenry? How could he deſert my Olivia for Miſs Owen? She has deſerted him in her turn: ſhe is the wife of Count De Ferranda; and I have no pity to beſtow on my forſaken nephew.—

Fitzhenry's eyes ſparkled with joy: he ſtopped to make a ſhort comment on his good fortune, and to demand the congratulations of his family; but they deſired him to proceed, which he did without any more ſelf-interruptions.—

I had been at Rome near a month before Lord Hillford joined me; I had hourly expected him the whole of that

time, and enquired what had detained him ſo long at Naples. He ſaid, it was the return of Fitzhenry, who, ſuppoſing he ſhould find Lady Owen and her daughter there, had come back with the intention of conducting them to Rome; but falling ſick, he had ſtayed to take care of him, and could not think of leaving him behind till the fever was removed, which had a good deal reduced his ſtrength; but that we ſhould ſee him in a few days;—and ordered an apartment to be prepared for his reception. I was grieved at this intelligence; and much more ſo, when ſeveral days elapſed, in which we neither heard of, nor ſaw Fitzhenry. I thought he might have relapſed; I entreated that I might be allowed to go back, and attend this beloved nephew. Ah! he was ſtill inexpreſſibly dear to me, notwithſtanding he had forſaken my Olivia. But my fears for his health ſoon abated, though I could leſs than ever account for his conduct.

duct. My Lord received a few lines from him, to ſignify that he had changed his mind, and ſhould return to England without viſiting Rome. He expreſſed himſelf with much vivacity; yet the writing was unſteady, and I trembled leſt he ſhould have undertaken the journey too ſoon for the reſtoration of his health. I durſt not unboſom my fears to Lord Hillford; he would have laughed at them. Since I have been his wife, I never remember to have ſeen him leſs ſplenetic or more cheerful than the firſt three weeks after he came from Naples. Then his humour ſuddenly changed—a deſperate gloom hung upon his countenance—he ſeldom ſpoke—his reſt was diſturbed, and his appetite forſook him. I was this evening to have attended a party he had formed, for the purpoſe of going about to different maſquerades. As ſoon as I underſtood that it was not his intention to make one of the party, I got a lady to perſonate me, and to go

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in my ſtead. Lord Hillford handed her himſelf to the carriage, without detecting my innocent ſtratagem; and I remained quietly in my own dreſſing-room. —As ſoon as my Lord thought that I was driven from the door, he rang his bell; and I heard him ſay to the ſervant, as he entered, Tell the people who ſay they have buſineſs with me, that I am ready to ſpeak to them. I heard him walk up and down with impatience in his ſtep; preſently the door opened, ſhut again, and the lock was turned, I ſuppoſe by Lord Hillford, who aſked, what right they had to demand bounty money after receiving the full ſum agreed on for the work they had done.—We do not ſell our ſouls at ſo ſcurvy a price, replied a rough ſounding voice;—Your Lordſhip promiſed too little for the job, even if we had done it at the firſt hit;—we expect to have our reward doubled for the chace he led us.—I could not diſtinguiſh what my Lord ſaid in anſwer

to this demand; his voice was raiſed, and he ſpoke in great rage. A ſcuffle enſued: my Lord groaned; I ſcreamed for help, and rang with as much ſtrength as I could exert. My cries, and the unuſual force with which I continued to pull the bell, ſoon brought our ſervants to the aſſiſtance of their Lord. The doors, which had been locked, were in a moment burſt open, and the miſerable victim of theſe murderous aſſaſſins lay extended on the floor, pierced with innumerable wounds. The wretches made their eſcape in this ſcene of horror. The poor expiring creature held out his hand towards me. I would have met it with my own; but in making the effort my ſenſes forſook me, and I was conveyed to my apartment. Here am I to remain in all the tortures of ſuſpenſe till to-morrow. If the ſurgeons do not deceive, if they have not flattered me with deluſive hopes, to-morrow I ſhall ſee him; to-night I am forbid to approach him; the

ſight of me muſt, they ſay, agitate him, and that any ſort of agitation in his preſent ſituation will be fatal. Ah! my deareſt brother, with what fervency ſhall I devote this night to prayer for my too guilty, too unfortunate huſband! My tears blind me; I can add nothing to what I have already written; the next packet, I hope, may bring you a better account of my ſituation. At all events, you ſhall ſoon hear from me.

Lord Uxington could not be expected to feel much regret for the fate of that man who had been ſo long the ſcourge of his family; neither did he paſs by with unhallowed indifference the divine retribution by which he appeared to be overtaken. It was evident enough, both to himſelf and Fitzhenry, that the very aſſaſſins, who had lifted their hands againſt his life, had alſo drenched their weapons in the blood of their employer. They adored the juſtice of Providence,

ſympathized in the accumulated diſtreſſes of Lady Hillford, waited impatiently for another letter; and were not perhaps very much ſurpriſed or afflicted, when at the end of ſix days it came to them under a black ſeal. It contained only a very few lines, merely to ſay, that the ſcene had cloſed for ever on Lord Hillford; that ſhe was oppreſſed with melancholy, and ſhould ſoon throw herſelf into the arms of her family. Here was a grand diſappointment, that her Ladyſhip did not mention the time when ſhe ſhould be on the road. Had that been fixed, Lord and Lady Uxington, with their two daughters, would have ſet out immediately to meet her half-way; but the uncertainty in which ſhe had left them reſpecting her motions, or the route ſhe ſhould take, forced them to relinquiſh the project, and to ſit down in a ſtate of anxious perturbation, expecting her arrival. They ſaw no company, ſpent much of their time at the windows,

and

and every travelling carriage that approached the houſe, conſtantly threw them into alarms till it had paſſed by the door.—On the ſixteenth day a *courier* preceded the appearance of Lady Hillford in Piccadilly. Her arrival was only two hours later than the meſſenger. It produced ſcenes too pathetic for repreſentation. Lady Hillford fainted in the embraces of her brother; and it was not till the next day that the meeting between theſe long ſeparated tender relations produced the effects of rational delight and ſober happineſs. Then it was that ſhe exculpated her nephew from the charge of inconſtancy; that ſhe contemplated the amiable traits of every feminine virtue, which revelled in the countenances of her lovely nieces, and cried out, Gracious Providence! for what bleſſings am I reſerved! In ſpite of recollection I muſt be happy!—As Fitzhenry revealed to her his preſent ſituation with Olivia, ſhe could not re-

ſtrain her tears. Ah! that dear and amiable child! ſaid ſhe, how fondly has my heart adopted her! We muſt not wait for the recovery of Lord Wardour, to bring you together. I ſhall ſend to the Princeſs; ſhe has profeſſed herſelf my friend; ſhe will not refuſe me the ſight of her daughter. Yes, Fitzhenry, Heaven has deſigned you for each——Before ſhe could finiſh the ſentence, a ſervant brought up the Princeſs Maritinda's compliments, with enquiries after the health of Lady Hillford, with the offer of a viſit from herſelf and Lady Olivia on the following morning, if her Ladyſhip was well enough to give them admiſſion.—This early advance on the part of the Princeſs communicated much delight to the little affectionate circle. I ſhould have ſaid, that by far the largeſt portion fell to the lot of Fitzhenry, if the tranſports of Lady Hillford had not equalled his own. The Earl and Counteſs thought it odd, that neither themſelves nor their

daughters

daughters ſhould be included in the meſſage; of courſe no compliments were returned from them; and it was agreed, that Lady Hillford ſhould receive her viſitors alone, and, if poſſible, afterwards obtain a preſentation for the reſt of her family. Fitzhenry declared, he could ill brook the delay; but was forced to ſubmit.

The conference broke up; Fitzhenry walked away to his friend Lord Wardour, whom he viſited daily. That patient ſufferer was now flattered with the hope, that in another week he ſhould be able to throw himſelf at the feet of Lady Elizabeth, and claim her hand from Lord Uxington, who had promiſed to beſtow it on him at the ſame time that he preſented Lady Jemima's to Sir Edward Courtenay, who was then in —— ſhire-making the final arrangements for her reception.

The Earl parted from his ſon at the door of Lady Hillford's apartment, and paſſed on to his own. A ſervant informed him, that a perſon waited to ſpeak to his Lordſhip, who would neither tell his name nor his buſineſs to any body but himſelf; that being a foreigner, who ſpoke Engliſh very indifferently, and having much the air of a man of condition, they had invited him to ſit down in one of the parlours till his Lordſhip was to be ſpoke with, he having refuſed to ſend any meſſage before he ſhould underſtand that his Lordſhip was in private.—Orders were given for the immediate admittance of this ſtranger, who made his approaches in no diſadvantageous light. His venerable figure commanded reſpect, his countenance beſpoke confidence, and his firſt addreſs engaged the whole attention of Lord Uxington. He announced himſelf a meſſenger from his Holineſs the Pope, whoſe only buſineſs in this country was to unveil a myſtery,

myſtery, which long enveloped the fate of ſome part of his Lordſhip's family. He ſaid this in Italian; and in the ſame language was politely requeſted to take a ſeat, and to declare freely what was the nature of his commands.—He did as deſired, pauſed, caſt his eyes on the ground, then lifted them up, fixed them on a picture of Lady Hillford, that faced him, done for her prior to her unfortunate marriage. What a likeneſs, he exclaimed, to the all excelling original, whoſe very errors have aſſumed the form of virtues! Your approbation, replied Lord Uxington, is extremely flattering to my ſiſter, and gives me reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe has the honour of being known to you. —I ſhall explain myſelf more clearly, returned the ſtranger:—My ſituation near the perſon of his Holineſs has given me frequent opportunities of ſeeing Lady Hillford, and marking that ſteadineſs of principle by which her faith however ill-founded, has been ſupported. I beg

your pardon my Lord—I am not come on an errand of converſion:—though a catholic, I can diſtinguiſh the greatneſs of Lady Hillford's mind, and honour with my whole heart her invincible conſtancy. She has gone through great trials, great perſecutions; the greateſt of all remains for me to develop. Had not Lady Hillford a daughter, my Lord? Yes, replied his Lordſhip; ſhe has once been a mother, but the infant was taken from her at an early ſeaſon.——By what ſupernatural interference, cried the foreigner, in a tone of aſtoniſhment, has this intelligence been conveyed to your Lordſhip? or has Mrs. Pemberton already revealed the cruel deception? Does Lady Hillford know, that Lady Olivia is her daughter—the very child that was taken from her?—I fear to conſtrue your meaning, replied Lord Uxington, graſping the hand of the ſpeaker; I fear to cheriſh the idea of happineſs your words inſpire. If

I have

I have not loſt my ſenſes, if there is no illuſion, explain to me how it can be poſſible that Lady Olivia ſhould be my niece, and the daughter of my ſiſter. I ſee my fault, ſaid he; your expreſſion of the infant's being taken from Lady Hillford occaſioned my error; I have been too abrupt; but what I have haſtily advanced, permit me now to ſubſtantiate. Lady Olivia, continued he, has been bred up in retirement under the abſolute direction of Mrs. Pemberton, who had conformed to the church of Rome, changed her name to Melmoth, and gave the ſame to her infant charge. Lord Hillford had deſtined her for a young nobleman of your country, but of our perſuaſion. He heard that ſhe was forming another attachment, ſent for her to Italy, and in the character of a viſitor received her into his family. Your ſon, my Lord, followed her thither: he can give you better information than I can do, of the private tranſactions that paſſed between

between himſelf and Lord Hillford; but it was at this time that his Lordſhip threw himſelf at the feet of his Holineſs, beſeeching him to adopt parents, who ſhould acknowledge Lady Olivia, and by whoſe authority ſhe might be reſtrained from uniting her deſtiny with that of an heretic. To this petition his Holineſs aſſented. He had ever been the patron of Lord Hillford, which made him nominate the Prince and Princeſs Maritinda, the latter being his own niece, to the honor of preſiding over the fate of Lady Olivia, until her real father was at liberty to put in his ſuperior claims; which could not be, he ſaid, as long as Lady Hillford lived, and continued refractory. He, who could ſpeculate on the life of another, made no calculation on the ſhortneſs of his own; he was overtaken by his fate when leaſt prepared to ſubmit. The agonies of his body were great, the tortures of his mind inſupportable. The affection with which your ſiſter attended him,

him, penetrated his heart; but he ſtill with-held from her the only cordial-drop that could have revived her ſpirits. It was myſelf that confeſſed him in his laſt moments; and the meſſage I conveyed from his Lordſhip to his Holineſs occaſioned him to command my attendance in this country, where I was ordered to remain till the arrival of Lady Hillford ſhould put it in my power to endow her with maternal rights, and eſtabliſh the heireſs of Lord Hillford in all the ſplendid fortunes of her father. To-morrow the Princeſs Maritinda reſigns her eſtimable charge to the arms of her exemplary mother. I have now only to requeſt, that your Lordſhip will prepare Lady Hillford for a weight of felicity, the force of which may, withou caution, prove deſtructive in its operation; and alſo to ſolicit your forgiveneſs for the Princeſs, whoſe indiſpenſable obedience to a power no good catholic ever yet reſiſted, muſt otherwiſe make her appear before you guilty and criminal.—Much

other

other converſation enſued, by which the Earl underſtood that his old aunt Pemberton was returned to Italy, on hearing that Lord Hillford had acknowledged his daughter, and that by the conſent of his Holineſs, ſhe was to be reſtored to her mother on her Ladyſhip's arrival in Britain. She had taken, he ſaid, a tender farewell of Lady Olivia, and ſhut herſelf up in a convent, to avoid the reproaches of her family.—The good father alſo added that the Princeſs Maritinda had not yet lifted up the veil which concealed from her lovely ward the ſecret of her birth; but meant to remove it before ſhe preſented her to Lady Hillford. Will ſhe be appriſed of it this evening? aſked Lord Uxington. Not, if your Lordſhip permits it to be otherwiſe, was the anſwer.—She has been much indiſpoſed; the ſtrongeſt impulſes of nature are thoſe in which nature does not ſeem to be conſulted. The premature fate of one parent, and the afflictions of another, though unconſcious of the ties

which

which united them to her, have produced their effects. She fell ill of a fever, and though recovered from the ſevereſt of its attacks, the Princeſs wiſhes to defer for one night longer a communication that muſt be attended with the moſt lively agitation.—But, ſaid the Earl, may we not ſolicit the Princeſs, that ſhe will permit us the indulgence of paying our compliments at her own houſe this evening as viſitors to herſelf; when, without acknowledging our relationſhip, we might ſee my niece, and make ſome intereſt in her affections?—You are all generoſity, replied the father;—I have it in my commiſſion to make a ſimilar propoſal from the Princeſs, if any part of your family are inclined to do her that honour. She will call it a propitious condeſcenſion; it ſhall quench the bluſh of retroſpection, and make her meet your eyes in the confidence of pardon.—Tell the princeſs, my dear ſir, cried Lord Uxington, penetrated by his words and the look

that

that accompanied them—tell her, it is impoſſible that I or mine ſhould ever ceaſe to remember the obligations her goodneſs has laid us under.—The father bowed his thanks, and retired.

Lord Uxington had left the Counteſs and her daughters with Lady Hillford. His heart was overcharged with happineſs; he longed to ſhare it with his family, and not one of them happened to fall in the way of his impatience. He went back to his ſiſters' apartment; the ladies had not ſeparated; he walked up and down the room, but ſaid nothing. Elizabeth and Jemima were telling their aunt of their accidental meeting with Olivia, as ſhe travelled through Wales. His eyes fixed on the intereſting countenance of Lady Hillford, illumined by the ſubject which engaged the whole of her attention—he ſtopped, took one of her hands in his, and preſſed it to his lips. Theſe girls, ſaid he, will fatigue you,

you, my dear Iſabella; you muſt allow your ſiſter and me to drag them from you; we will all return to you again; but I inſiſt on your taking ſome repoſe before dinner. She would have reſiſted this propoſal, but he hurried them out of her chamber.

It will be eaſily ſuppoſed what ſort of emotions the little narrative related by the Earl produced in his aſtoniſhed auditors; amongſt which number was Fitzhenry, who returned from Lord Wardour juſt in time to partake of the ſecret, and to give a proof that there is more expreſſion in the phrenſy of paſſionate tranſports, than in the cold language of reaſon, or the deliberate wiſdom of philoſophy.

By the time they rejoined Lady Hillford, their ſpirits were tolerably tranquillized, and in conſequence of a plan that had been before projected, Fitzhenry

henry propoſed that his mother ſhould ſend her name to Groſvenor-ſquare: for, conſidering, ſaid he, that the Princeſs has not been remarkably gracious—without ſome ſuch encouraging hint of forgiveneſs on our part, I ſhould really pity her ſituation when ſhe makes her *entrée* to-morrow, though her viſit is declaredly to my aunt, and we are out of the queſtion. Every body approved the motion, but none ſo much as Lady Hillford.—— The Earl ſaid that in his opinion it required amendment—he did not like ſending about names, but that if any of his family choſe to turn out volunteers, he would himſelf make one of the party. Then go without me, as many as you pleaſe, cried the Counteſs: if you are not let in, my name may be left with the reſt; but if you ſee the Princeſs you will know how to make my excuſes—and ſmiled on Lady Hillford, who, quite oppreſſed with ſatisfaction at the propoſed arrangement, claſped her hands together,

together, and, with a ſort of energy reſembling inſpiration, cried out, if you ſee my Olivia, tell her I am counting the moments that divide us, with more than a mother's impatience.

Had ſhe ſaid, with more than a lover's, the impetuoſity of Fitzhenry would have rendered the aſſertion at leaſt doubtful. He had ordered his chariot twenty minutes ſooner than his father and ſiſters had appointed for their viſit; he ſaid he ſhould firſt call on Lord Wardour, and would afterwards meet them in Groſvenor-ſquare, but this was only a pre-concerted deception; for had a hoſt of his friends been ſituated between Piccadilly and Groſvenor-ſquare, he would have made no ſtop at any of their doors until he had thrown himſelf at the feet of his miſtreſs. The two gentle taps, by which he choſe his arrival ſhould be announced, gave no alarm to the Princeſs: ſhe expected no viſitors but Lord Uxington's family,

family, and the time for expecting them was yet at ſome diſtance. The myſtery of her birth chance had already revealed to Olivia, on the return of father Chichiani from his conference with the Earl; ſhe was an unpremeditated auditreſs of a repetition of the whole ſcene that had paſſed between them.——The Princeſs brought him to her own chamber, where they might talk with the greater privacy. —Lady Olivia had entered juſt before them; a faintneſs, to which ſhe was now frequently ſubject, ſuddenly came over her; ſhe threw herſelf on the bed, and the curtains concealed her; but when ſhe heard that ſhe was the daughter of Lady Hillford, and not of the Princeſs, ſhe ſtarted up, fell at the feet of the latter, and entreated ſhe might that moment fly to the arms of her mother. If the premature knowledge of her condition was an evil, it was alſo without remedy; but they prevailed on her to ſubmit that Lady Hillford ſhould be properly

perly appriſed of the great event before ſhe ruſhed into her preſence, which could by no means be effected till the next morning.—For her ſake ſhe ſubmitted—By ſome part of her mother's family ſhe ſhould that evening be acknowledged; and the probability that Lord Fitzhenry might be amongſt the firſt to claim the alliance, increaſed the vivacity of her ſenſations, though it certainly added nothing to her compoſure. Dinner was announced; ſhe appeared at table, but was unable to eat. You muſt lie down, ſaid the Princeſs, and calm theſe perturbations; they will otherwiſe deſtroy you. She led her to a ſofa, made her repoſe on it, ſat by her ſide, tenderly retaining one of her hands, whilſt the other fell on a roſe-coloured ſatin cloak which the Princeſs had caſt over her, and afforded a moſt beautiful contraſt. Finding that ſhe was ſtill extremely reſtleſs and agitated, this affectionate friend, who loved her with extreme fondneſs, had taken up a book,

a book, in hopes the ſubject of it might detach her thoughts from another more intereſting; and the ſound of her voice, in a ſoft equal key, acting as a ſoother on the irritated nerves of Olivia, ſhe had fallen into a ſweet ſleep about ten minutes before the unexpected entrance of Lord Fitzhenry. He ſtarted and turned pale at the ſcene that preſented itſelf.—Joy, which the moment before never looked ſo much at home as on his countenance, was ſuperceded by terror. He obeyed the ſilent mandate that beckoned him to approach the ſofa without noiſe—ſo cautiouſly did he obey it, that a ſylph could not have trod lighter. Good God! whiſpered he, am I ſtill doomed to miſery?—am I no ſooner permitted to ſee my adorable couſin, than I find her ill, perhaps dying? Peace! re-whiſpered the Princeſs, with a good-humoured ſmile, that did away much of his apprehenſion—there is no change that I can perceive either in you or your couſin; you might both

both be happy enough if you did but know how to ſupport your happineſs—the dear child is no ſtranger to the large portion of felicity that awaits her—it has been too much for her ſpirits—ſhe will do very well, but I muſt not have her diſturbed.—I diſturb her!—not for the world, ſaid Fitzhenry ſoftly; but, dear Princeſs, if your life, hers, and my own were at ſtake, I would look upon her. He did not wait for permiſſion to do as he threatened; he left the back of the ſofa over which he had been ſpeaking, and knelt down by the ſide of Olivia.—He contemplated the wonders of her face, and wiſhed that the long dark laſhes, which concealed from his view the fineſt eyes in the world, would lift themſelves up and releaſe their beautiful priſoners. He next gazed in tranſports on the white hand that reſted upon the crimſon cloak, and his face was bending towards it, when a loud thundering at the door cauſed Olivia to ſtart; ſhe opened her eyes,

and

and ſeeing Fitzhenry kneeling, the bluſhes that covered her cheeks were a lively proof how much the colours of nature ſurpaſs thoſe of art. For Heaven's ſake! cried Fitzhenry, riſing and ſpeaking to the Princeſs, receive my father in the next room, whilſt I ſpeak five words to my angel! I will convince you, ſhe replied, that I am in reality your friend, though I have appeared to be your enemy; and went into the next apartment, where ſhe contrived to keep her viſitors ſo long, in making a handſome apology for her paſt conduct, and by telling them in what manner Lady Olivia became poſſeſſed of their ſecret, that when their new relation was preſented to them, no traces of indiſpoſition remained on her countenance. The magic of conſolation lies in a much leſs compaſs of time than was allowed to Lord Fitzhenry to plead his own cauſe. If ſhe had before ſuſpected the conſtancy of his attachment, ſhe no longer ſuſpected it; and

when

when received to the embraces of her uncle and couſins, ſhe was almoſt inclined to ſay to them, Are you not my father and my ſiſters? But what modeſty reſtrained, her ingenuous countenance declared in a language ſo enchanting, that Lord Uxington yielded to a faſcination equal to his ſon's, in every thing but the tender paſſion; and, unwilling to leave her behind, prevailed on the Princeſs that ſhe ſhould be allowed to return with them to Groſvenor-ſquare, as alſo to dine there herſelf the next day, and to bring father Chichiani with her, who had not appeared at this interview. On you, my love, and on your charming friends, ſaid ſhe, embracing Olivia, I depend for making my peace with the Counteſs, and wreſting my pardon from Lady Hillford—and, ah! my ſweet, my adopted child, added ſhe, burſting into tears, let me have no other rivals in your affection, but that mother, and the family to whom I conſign you. A requeſt

ſo full of ſenſibility, produced its effect—Filial ardour could alone have heightened, and filial impatience only could have ſhortened, the pathetic ſcene.

Fitzhenry had, by the ſpeed with which he was conveyed home, preceded his family a few minutes, ſo that Lady Hillford and the Counteſs were prepared for the reception of their unexpected gueſt. Nature, ever buſy at exemplifying her own cunning labours, began to work privately on the heart of Lady Hillford: her ſtrokes were ſilent, and the impreſſion, though maſterly, was confuſed. Fitzhenry heard the chairs ſet down in the hall, he flew to take out his trembling agitated Olivia, and forced her to ſwallow a glaſs of water before he conducted her to the preſence of her mother, whoſe arms were extended to receive her, and on whoſe boſom ſhe let fall the ſweeteſt drops that joy unutterable ever called to aid its expreſſion. Lord Uxbridge

ington ſeparated them, fearing that inadvertency on one part, and maternal feelings on the other, might produce a too ſudden explanation. Olivia was preſented to the Counteſs by Fitzhenry, who whiſpered his mother as ſhe affectionately embraced her—She is now only your niece, I ſhall be wretched until you receive her as a daughter. He did not ſpeak ſo low but that his lovely couſin heard what he ſaid; her face was ſuffuſed with bluſhes; ſhe was the pupil of modeſty; but ſcorning affectation, extended her hand to the lover who had ever poſſeſſed her heart: he preſſed it paſſionately to his lips; and at that moment the Earl, who had been trying to engage the attention of Lady Hillford, came up with her, and joined the party. Olivia ſat by her mother at ſupper; they neither of them ate any thing; their hands were claſped, and their eyes rivetted on each other. When the ſervants were gone out, Lord Uxington roſe, took ſome

turns acroſs the room, then leaned on the back of his ſiſter's chair, and ſeemed irreſolute whether he ſhould ſpeak or be ſilent. Fitzhenry, who had placed himſelf on the other hand of Olivia, and felt for all the ſuppreſſed agonies of tenderneſs under which ſhe was viſibly ſuffering, fancied he read in the thoughtful countenance of his father for what purpoſe his mind was labouring, and by a look of entreaty implored him to proceed. His Lordſhip perfectly underſtood the ſilent petition, and, looking round on the reſt of his family, ſaw that it was backed with energy by every one of them; he then placed himſelf between his wife and his ſiſter—I am not a caſuiſt ſufficiently able, ſaid he, to decide on a queſtion that has juſt now occurred to me, and you muſt help me to digeſt it.—If it be not law to withhold from another that property which we know he has a right to poſſeſs, by what ſophiſtry ſhall we defend that puſillanimous timidity which

which ſhrinks from communicating happineſs to whom it belongs, merely from the coward fear of its being more than the owner of it will know how to manage?—There is no excuſe in the world, cried the Counteſs eagerly, for this ſort of ſubterfuge; every moment that felicity is in arrears to the unfortunate, whoever has it in his power to ſettle the account, and refuſes to do ſo, let the motive be what it will, is no better than a ſwindler of the worſt deſcription. Lady Hillford ſeemed to feel very little intereſted in this converſation, being wholly taken up in repeating to Olivia all that ſhe had ſuffered from their long ſeparation; whoſe fine countenance paſſed through ſo many changes, that Fitzhenry heartily wiſhed his father was arrived at the diſcloſure. He forced her to drink a glaſs of Madeira:—ſhe could not carry it to her mouth; he aſſiſted her, and in doing ſo, felt that her hand was colder than the head of a politician,

or the heart of a coquette. My deareſt Iſabella, continued the Earl, why do you refuſe me your attention? Ah! ſaid ſhe ſmiling, if you expect to engroſs the whole, why did you bring this ſyren to claim a ſhare in it?—I have no great objection to her claim, he replied; but that I may not be quite thrown out, I ſhall make Lady Olivia my future ſubject; and then I am ſure you will liſten to me. Do you know, I have this day diſcovered that ſhe is not the daughter of the Prince and Princeſs Maritinda? Aſtoniſhing! cried ſhe, and have you alſo diſcovered, my dear brother, who are the bleſſed parents of this precious child? I think, he replied, I never ſaw a ſtronger reſemblance than ſhe bears to yourſelf; one would be almoſt tempted to believe that ſhe had no other mother. Oh that ſhe had no other! exclaimed Lady Hillford.—Olivia turned pale; ſhe looked at her uncle, her lips divided, but ſhe was unable to utter.—My great,

my noble-minded ſiſter, continued Lord Uxington, agitated beyond deſcription, and preſſing her hands to his heart, if I ſhould indulge you by entering into the hiſtory of this young lady, can you give me hopes that the ſame fortitude which ſupported you in leſs happy moments, would exert itſelf to bear you up againſt the torrent of her good fortune and your own?—You are ſweetly and yet cruelly myſterious, ſhe replied; I love you all, every one of you; yet this child is the deareſt object of my affections; but how is my fate connected with her's? Explain it quickly, I beſeech you. You had a doughter Iſabella—Oh! heavenly Providence! ſhe cried, grant that I be not too preſumptuous on thy bounty! She is thine or mine; if mine, this is my very daughter —I am—I am—was all that Olivia could ſay; her arms encircled the neck, and her head fell on the boſom of her mother. What followed admits of no repreſentation; the family did not ſeparate till it

was

was extremely late, and Olivia paſſed the remainder of the night, or rather morning, in Lady Hillford's apartment. When this manœuvre was objected to, as likely to diſturb the repoſe of both, the meaning, if not the words, of the pathetic Ruth and the beautiful Olivia were exactly the ſame:—" Where thou goeſt I will go, and where thou lodgeſt I will lodge; thy people ſhall be my people, and thy God my God." She followed her to her chamber, partook of her bed, and reſolved to embrace the faith which had ſo glorioufly ſupported itſelf in all the trials of her exemplary mother.

Fitzhenry did not loſe any of his precious moments in ſleep, and at eight o'clock the next morning he was at the bed-ſide of Lord Wardour, who participated in his tranſports, and all the various emotions they created, with a warmth little inferior to his own. For the firſt time the ſurgeons allowed their patient

that

that day to leave his chamber; and he encroached conſiderably on their permiſſion, by ſpending the whole of it in Groſvenor-ſquare. It was a day of jubilee; the Princeſs Maritinda and father Chichiani were charmed with their reception; Lord Wardour was tranſported with joy; every countenance gladdened with rapture; every heart bounded at the attainment of his wiſhes. Fizhenry diſcovered that the picture worn by Lady Olivia, and which had coſt him ſo much agony, was actually a reſemblance of himſelf, the gift of her mother. Olivia diſcovered in him a thouſand new charms, a thouſand irreſiſtible graces. Lord Wardour diſcovered, that Lady Elizabeth received his devoirs without reluctance; and the playful Jemima diſcovered no little increaſe of vivacity on the appearance of Sir Edward Courtenay, who joined the happy group, very unexpectedly, before the ſecond courſe was removed.

Fears,

Fears, jealouſies, and plots all done away, there was much muſic in their ſociety; but, like that of the ſpheres, it is only to be felt. Sounds will convey no expreſſion of ſoul-created harmony.

The inveſtigation of Lord Hillford's affairs was attended with many difficulties and delays; his eſtates and property being much ſcattered in various countries; but at the termination of Lord Uxington's inquiries into them, he found his niece poſſeſſed of a fortune the greatneſs of which ſurpaſſed his expectation and very much exceeded his wiſhes. As to Fitzhenry, he was a lover, of courſe above beſtowing a thought on this petty circumſtance. To call the adorable Olivia his own, whether miſtreſs of one million, or one ſhilling, would have been exactly the ſame thing to Fitzhenry. Lady Hillford did not admit of the marriage taking place till ſhe had laid aſide her

her firſt mourning, and then the ceremony was privately performed, which on the ſame day united the Ladies Olivia, Elizabeth, and Jemima to the three men who of all others beſt deſerved them. Before this event, the Princes Maritinda had gone back to Italy with father Chichiani, and carried with her to Mrs. Pemberton, now no longer Melmoth, pardons more efficacious to heal her conſcience, than any that could have been granted by her confeſſor, or the Pope himſelf. Lady Olivia's woman, who had been ſo much the friend of Fitzhenry in his deſpairing moments, was not forgotten by him in the hour of exultation; and the bounty ſhe would have refuſed from the lover, ſhe gratefully accepted from the huſband of her dear miſtreſs.

Our weddings over, I chooſe the æra of bliſs to wind up my Hiſtory: For were

were I to keep it any longer open, it is ten to one ſome dark cloud or other would put itſelf in my way; and what a pity to obſcure the brightneſs of that deſtiny which at preſent preſides over the whole houſe of Uxington!

THE END.